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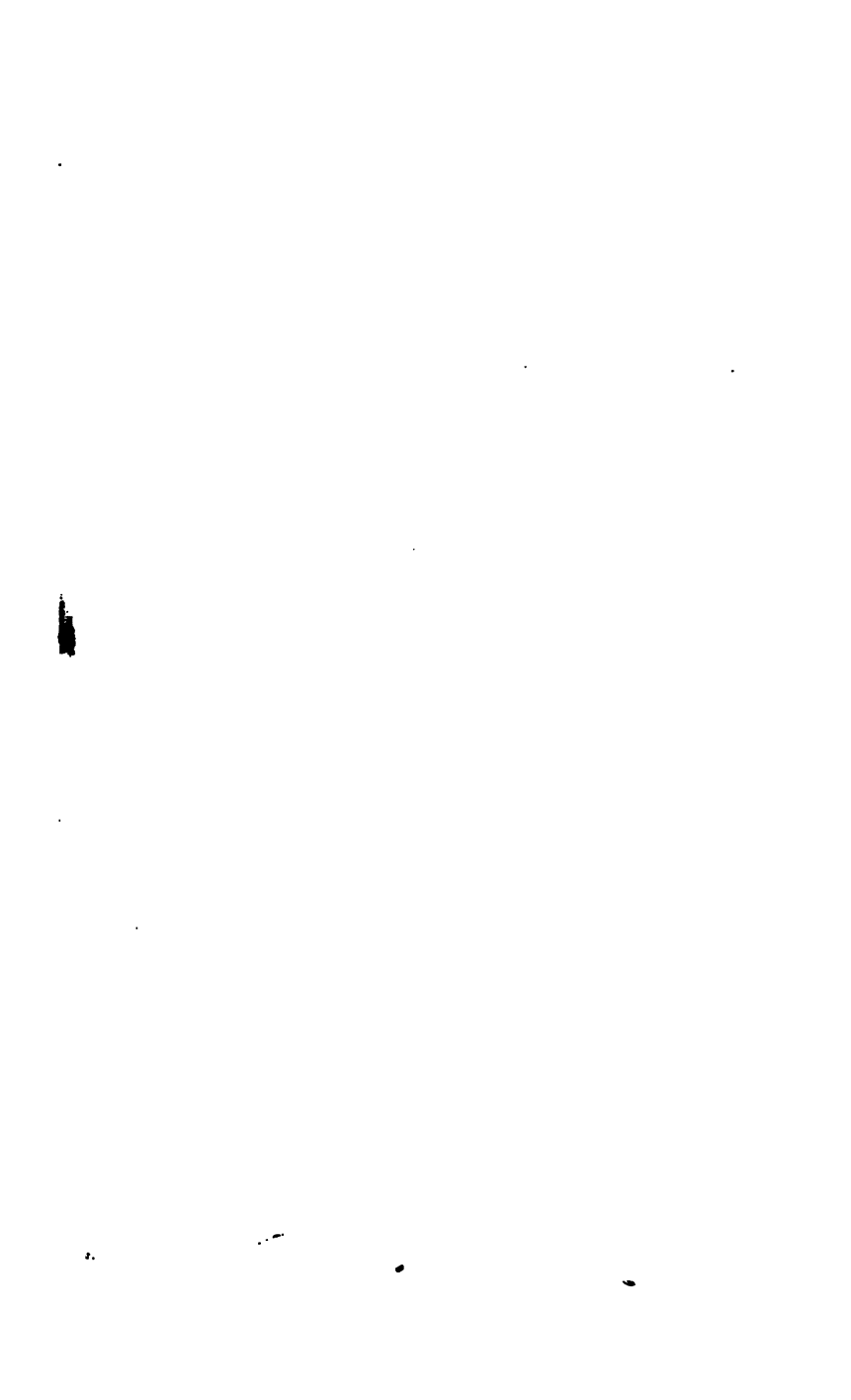


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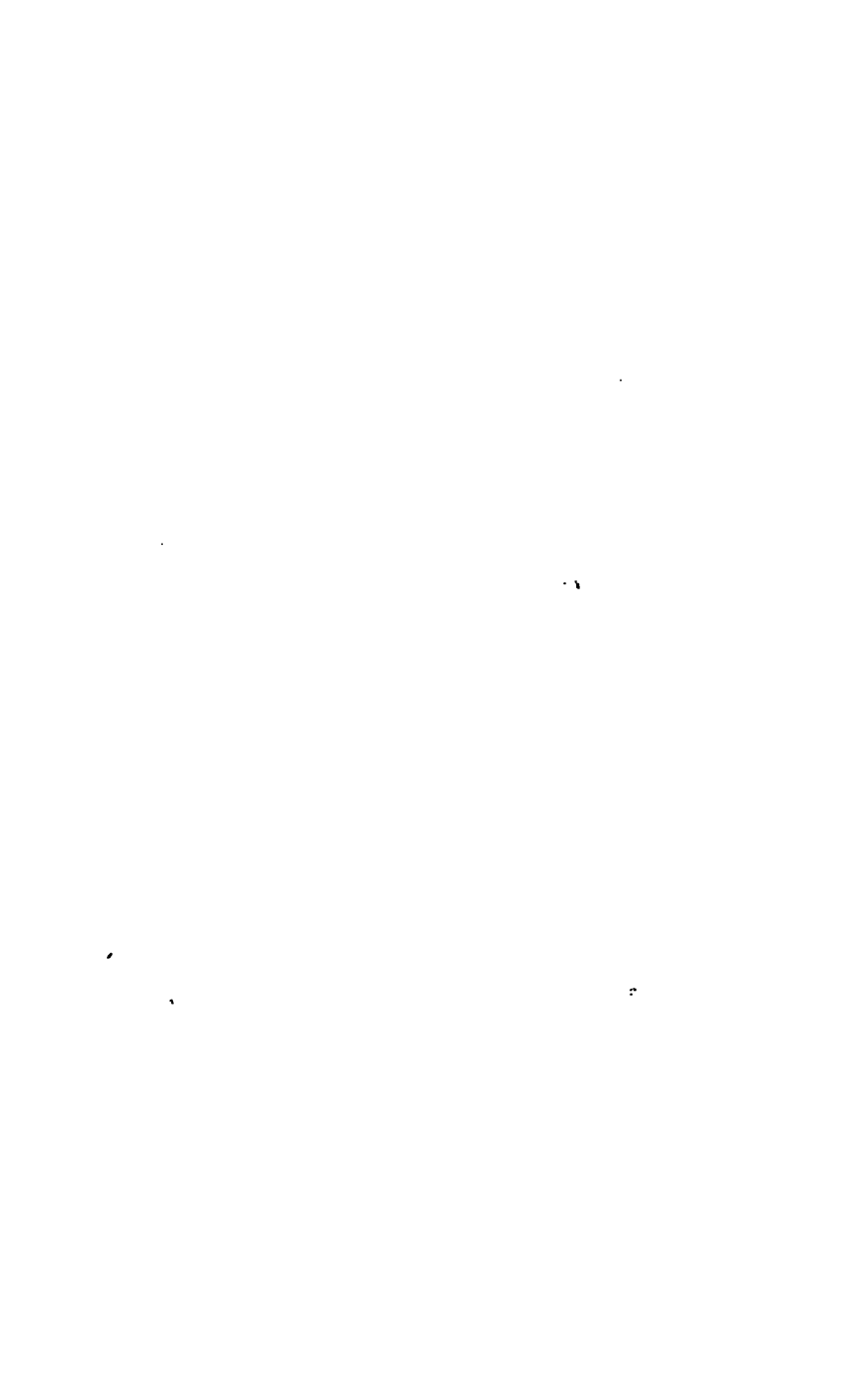
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PAUL AND JULIA;

OR,

THE POLITICAL MYSTERIES, HYPOCRISY,

AND

CRUELTY OF THE LEADERS OF

The Church of Rome.

BY

JOHN CLAUDIUS PITRAT,

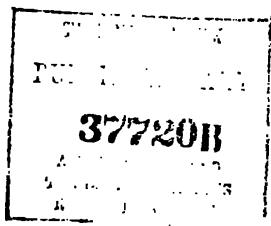
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF FRANCE; EX-EDITOR OF "LA PRESSE DU PEUPLE,"
IN PARIS; AUTHOR OF "JESUITS UNVEILED;"

AND FORMERLY A ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIEST.

BOSTON:

EDWARD W. HINKS AND COMPANY.

1855.



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WHO NOBLY FOUGHT, BLED, AND DIED, —

IN WHICH THE ANTI-AMERICAN SPIRIT OF ROMANISM
IS EXPOSED.

(3)

¶ To show that MR. PITRAT, the author of this work, was in good standing in the Romish Church, and that extraordinary exertions were made to retain him, the publishers submit the following letters.

EDW. W. HINKS & CO.

NEW ORLEANS, April 2, 1853.

VERY DEAR SIR: In the absence of my lord I have opened your letter. I can hardly believe that you have resolved to leave the ministry. This news will afflict the heart of our bishop, who intended to call you near him, and to write to you about it. Please be not too hasty in your design. Reflect; pray that God enlighten you. For my part I will pray, and will order prayers for you. The proof of confidence which you have given me induces me to request you to let me know what are your future projects. You know my friendship towards you. I have obtained from the bishop that you live with us in his house, you would have come to the city in May. Understand now how sad is my disappointment. I shall be very uneasy till I hear from you.

Believe me, your very devoted friend,

E. ROUSSELON, Vicar General.

NEW ORLEANS, April 4, 1850.

MY DEAR MR. PITRAT: I just return from a pastoral visit. I cannot express what I have felt in reading your letter of resignation. What! is it possible, my dear priest, that having made the sacrifice of so many temporal advantages to be faithful to your ecclesiastical calling, you renounce it? and this, when I intended to give you a home in my own house? O, please, my dear priest, reflect. Your eternal salvation is at stake. I think that my kindness to you has some claim to my confidence. Please let me know what are your motives for leaving the ministry. Depend on my discretion. Be not hasty, and wait for a letter from me. If you prefer, go to Natchez for counsel. Pray to God with fervor, for you are about to sacrifice your temporal welfare and your eternity. I am about leaving for Red River; but it matters not; direct your letter to New Orleans; I shall receive it. I will not forget you in my prayers. This morning I have said the mass for you. Farewell again.

Your devoted and affectionate servant,

† ANT., Bishop of New Orleans.

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Paul and Julia.

CHAPTER I.

VALLEY IN THE CAUCASUS.



IN the western side of the Caucasus a lofty peak arises, and, like a spear, shoots towards heaven. Lower down, a high mountain unrolls itself, and, like a monstrous serpent, winds towards the horizon.

When, through the snows, the mountaineer has climbed their sides, wearied he sits on the summit, and contem-

plates the immensity which surrounds him. What strikes him in this picture, where the colors are so rich, the landscapes so varied, and the objects delineated in such gigantic proportions, is a deep valley,

which resembles a vast sheet spread by the hand of nature. At his feet gush forth the sources of many small torrents, which, confined in their pebbly beds, murmur, fall, roll, and fall again in foam from rock to rock, until they reach the base; then glide gently along, and water the meadows in their course.

Dark forests blacken the sides of the mountain, and beyond are planted large vineyards.* Fields, divided into innumerable portions, display their green, pale, and darker hues, and are ornamented by blooming fruit trees. Numerous flocks are grazing silently. The shepherds, grouped around large fires, join in merry sports. The woodman, felling the trees to enlarge his domain, makes the forest resound with the stroke of his axe. In every direction, the laborers are heard repeating some joyous songs of the Caucasus.

Scattered here and there are humble cottages and modest habitations, surrounded by orchards. In the centre of the hamlets is neither mosque nor minaret, but only a rude wooden tower, with sides and angles, roughly squared. This valley, which forms so luxuriant a carpet, where all objects are so pleasing to the eye, is inhabited by a colony of the Ossetes.

* The religion of the Ossetes is an imperfect mixture of Mahometanism and Christianity. They raise grapes, as well as the Abazes and other tribes of the Caucasus.

CHAPTER II.

ENEMIES COMING.



T WAS on the evening of one of those beautiful days, when Nature, having cast off her winding-sheet of death, celebrated her new birth, and, to the delight of mortals, robed herself in her tunic of green and flowers. The domes in the valley cast their dark and lengthened shadows far in the distance. The sun, having reached the top of the peak, gilded its crest, and his bloody disk seemed an eye of fire on the brow of this giant of the mountains. Along the western side streamed floods of light, which were reflected near the summit by its snowy or frozen plains and rugged surfaces. Lower down, the beams were caught by the ridges, points, and cornices of the rocks, and multiplied into myriads of golden rays, which, losing their brightness as they descended, made darker the valley below.

The departing sun soon gilded the outline of the eternal snows. The children sported before their fathers as they returned from labor. The women, joyful at the return of those they loved, prepared the

evening meal. The vinedresser laid aside his pruning knife, and came merrily singing. The ploughman urged his weary team, as it slowly brought back the plough. In a short time, all the laborers had reached their homes, and by their cheerful firesides refreshed themselves, after the fatigues of the day, in the bosoms of their families.

After the evening meal, the daughters of the valley were seen directing their steps to a solitary grove, where they knelt, joined their hands, lifted their eyes towards heaven, and fervently recited an evening prayer:—

“Prophet of the Almighty, draw thy lips for a moment from the voluptuous cup; suspend thy everlasting drunkenness, and from thy heaven let fall on our valley a smiling look.

“Divine Mahomet, listen to the prayer of the young Ossetine.

“The daughter of the mountains, living far from the cities, does not hear from the top of the minarets the signal of the holy hour.* She has never seen thy grand pontiff. No man teaches her thy sublime oracles. She has no mosque in which she burns incense to thee. From the garden of the flagrant flowers of the valley she lifts her eyes towards thee: accept at least the incense which she burns to thee, that of her heart.

“Divine Mahomet, listen to the prayer of the young Ossetine.

* The Mahometans use no bells in their mosques: their Imams, or priests, announce the divine services by striking a board on the top of the minarets.

"Ask for her sheep a rich wool; for her goat, a silky gown; for her flock, abundant pasture. Obtain for her field, an exuberant harvest; for her tribe, happiness here below; for those endeared to her, long days and undisturbed old age.

"Divine Mahomet, listen to the prayer of the young Ossetine.

"The brooks murmuring flow along the valley; thus flows the stream of her life. She wishes for wisdom, beauty, and virtue; for a lover, the most valiant among young warriors, the most faithful among husbands. Through thy intercession the Great Spirit will grant her wishes.

"Divine Mahomet, listen to the prayer of the young Ossetine."

And the young suppliants hailed the occident.

Suddenly the shepherds, who were attending to their flocks on the opposite side of the valley, ran, exclaiming, "We have seen enemies beyond the mountain!"

From every hamlet, from every family, the alarming cry went forth, "To arms! to arms! Enemies are coming!"

The shepherds were led to the chief, who asked them, —

"Where did you see those enemies?"

"Beyond the mountain of the prophet, near that one which is still covered with snow."

"Why suppose you they are enemies?"

"Their costume and armor are so strange."

"Are they numerous?"

"They are a whole tribe."

"Are there horsemen among them?"

"Hundreds of them."

"Is their armor that of a neighboring tribe?"

"We do not know."

Isram hurried among the people already assembled. "To arms!" cried he; "let's haste to the battle tower."

The young men immediately took down their swords, and girded on them their belts, on which two bright pistols were suspended; mounted their warlike steeds, who, animated by the noise and spur, with fiery eyes, flaming nostrils, and foaming mouths, shook their flowing manes, champed their bits, and pawed the ground. Those warriors who had shed their blood in the battle field equipped themselves in the glorious armor taken from their enemies, and hastened to guide and encourage those valiant youths. The young, fair, and beautiful Ossetines arranged their quivers, placed their buckler to the left arm, bent their bows, brandished poisoned arrows, and flew to the battle tower. The old men, whose limbs were stiffened by toil or paralyzed by noble wounds, advanced more slowly, and with difficulty mounted the steps of this ancient tower, where were deposited the arms which they had handled in their youth, and from whence they had so often seen their enemies flying.

Isram reached the top of the tower. He raised his voice, and all became silent.

"Sons of the valley, seeing in the hands of strangers the torch of fire, and the chain of slavery, you have said, 'Let us protect our homes! Let us repel slavery! Let our arms rise simultaneously to strike the enemy.' This expression is noble; you will be victorious; for

union gives strength. Why are my steps tottering, and my hands feeble, that I cannot march at your head? Alas! I have not even a son, with the hands of whom I would fight with you. The grass is growing upon his tomb.

"Warriors, God sees the justice of your cause. He will bless your arms. But when victorious, shed no more blood. He has said by the mouth of Christ, that we must forgive our enemies."

Then the old men and mothers of the warriors, standing upon the tower, raised their feeble hands and supplicating eyes towards heaven, and with weak and trembling voices, prayed, —

"Great Spirit, Sultan of heaven and earth, curse the strangers who trouble us in the decline of life; who bring to our sons slavery, to our daughters dishonor. Cause their arms to be broken by the first shock, and their arrogance subdued. Protect our soldiers; give strength to their arms, and courage to their hearts. Preserve them; if they fall, who will bury us? Who will plant over our tombs the cypress tree of remembrance? And thou, God of Christians, whom so many nations supplicate, whom our chief also worships, thou who hast endowed him with such rare wisdom, such deep science, curse the strangers, for thou art also the God of battles."

CHAPTER III

THE OSSETES PREPARE THEMSELVES FOR BATTLE. —
EXPLANATION BETWEEN THE CHIEFS OF THE TWO
ARMIES.



THE warriors had formed their lines of battle, when a young amazon, appearing at the head of the battalions, attracted all eyes. Her hands, white and soft as the feathers of the swan, sometimes let fall the reins of her steed, then stimulated and subdued him. Her robe displayed her beautiful form, and fell in long and graceful folds. A sword was suspended at her girdle, which was fastened with a white buckle. A necklace of pearls was twined round her neck, and fell in saltier upon a purple baldrick, to which her quiver was attached. A bow hung on her shoulder; an ægis shielded her breast. Her long hair was negligently knotted back. Confined in front by a gold clasp was a scarf of silky tissue, the outlines of which displayed the brightness of many colors. The fire of her eyes; the tears which

sometimes moistened her eyelids at the sight of the old man; her rosy mouth; the expression of the smile delineated on her lips, and the celestial beauty of all her features deified her face. It was Julia, the granddaughter of the chief of the tribe.

Suddenly a heavy rolling sound was borne along the side of the mountain. It was like an avalanche falling from a precipice, bearing with it detached rocks, shattering and overthrowing immense pines in its descent, and filling the ravines, and beds of the torrents, with the fragments. In the obscurity were seen, on the brow of the mountain, cavaliers with shining armor, horses loaded with booty, and numerous flocks driven by slaves. The trampling of feet, the neighing of horses, the bleating of sheep, and the lowing of cattle produced noisy and confused clamors.

"To arms, noble sons of Ossetes!" cried Isram. "Strangers bring us fetters. Let us live free, or all die rather than submit to slavery. To arms! to arms! Let us hasten to repulse tyrants."

The warriors shout their songs of maledictions:—

"Lift your heads, valiant Ossetes. Strangers crown our mountains. They come, torch in hand, to ravage our fields, to burn our cottages. They wish to drive away our flocks, and take away our treasures. Hear their loud outcries of fury, their savage shouts of battle and death! See the swords glittering in their hands.

"They say in their barbarous drunkenness,—

"‘We will take children from their mothers.’

"Madmen! do they think to see again their own?

"‘We will violate their wives bathed in tears.’

"Theirs will soon weep their widowhood.

"'We will defeat them; we will take their valley.'

"We will be their tyrants, or they shall fall, and cover the rocks crimsoned with their blood.

"Let them rapidly descend from the mountain. Our steeds, with pliant limbs and nimble feet, will trample them down, and cover their bodies with foam. Let their trumpets sound for the combat.

"Warriors, draw your swords. Women of brave hearts, bend your bows. Let your arrows darken the air, and pierce their bodies. They will fall, biting the dust. We will tear out their hearts, and give them for food to the wild beasts. God of our families, God of our firesides, march and fight with thy children!"

The battalions moved, and were about to rush upon the enemy, when three cavaliers presented themselves. They dismounted, and asked to speak to the chief. A murmur of surprise pervaded the ranks. The lines opened, and they bowed respectfully before Isram, who thus addressed them:—

"Strangers, who are you?"

"Illustrious chief," replied the youngest, "my brothers in arms are two captains of the advancing army, and I am the young Kareem, son of their commander."

"Under what sky were you born? What country cradled you?"

"The Caucasus is the country of our birth; the Lesguitan Mountains were our cradles."

"What brought you to our valley? Are you friends or enemies?"

"We are friends, and come to ask alliance and hospitality."

A beam of pleasure overspread the countenance of Isram, and every face was radiant with confidence and joy. With one voice they all exclaimed,—

“Yes, we offer you hospitality, and accept your alliance. The strangers are no longer enemies; they are our brothers.”

Immediately a cavalier leaped the space, and announced to the Lesguis the happy news of friendship. Then shouts of joy were echoed in the valley. Soon Lesguis and Ossetes mingled together, and saluted each other with cordiality.

The two chiefs advanced into the midst of the battalions, placed their hands upon the blade of a lance, raised their eyes to heaven, and confirmed by an oath their contracted alliance. They had exchanged but a few words, when their voices were drowned by the acclamations of the people. The Ossetes shared their humble cottages with the Lesguis, and erected tents under the spreading branches of the trees, and drove their flocks to the richest pastures. The women lighted large fires, and prepared for a fraternal banquet the most delicious meats, and served an abundance of the richest milk. The young girls took osier baskets, which they had woven with their own hands, lined them with green leaves, filled them with the golden fruits of autumn, gracefully arranged clusters of the finest grapes, and bore them to the place where the young men had arranged the banquet, and served the most generous wine.

Isram led the commander of the Lesguis into their midst. He was robed in a beautifully-worked tunic, whose drapery fell in graceful festoons. Around his

waist, he wore a large white scarf, symbol of his authority. A long, thick beard covered his chin, and whitened his breast. His forehead was furrowed with wrinkles, as the rough trunk of an old oak, and his head whitened with the winters of age, as the mountains with the snow. The mildness and firmness of his appearance, the serenity of his countenance, the majesty of his figure, and the dignity of his step commanded the respect and veneration of all. He seemed the personification of wisdom descended from heaven.

Both took their places ; and Isram, at the request of Karem, presided at the festival. His table was not more sumptuously served than the others. He did not take a place of distinction ; for he felt that he was the brother, and not the lord, of the people over whom he presided ; that the first among brothers ought to be the servant of all. He knew that, accepting the election of his tribe, he had assumed a priesthood, by which he became a victim and a holocaust ; that he had engaged to govern only with love and self-denial. At his right sat Karem, and at his left, the young amazon, whose appearance was so martial, whose looks so mild. She bestowed upon him the most affectionate attentions, served him with food, filled his cup, and presented it to him. Near her sat young Karem, who was attracted by her, and seemed absorbed in thought. The assembly already pledged each other, and drained their cups to the sweets of friendship. The Lesguis were surprised at such generosity, and were at a loss to express their gratitude. The oldest inhabitants of the valley said they had never seen so fine a feast.

Witnessing the enjoyment of all, Isram could not refrain from expressing to Karem his delight at the happiness, order, and harmony which prevailed among them. He then addressed him thus : —

“ Karem, will you relate the events which procured us the pleasure of this visit ? ”

“ Illustrious chief,” he answered, “ these are they : The last snows still whitened the earth when the trumpet of departure sounded among the Lesguis. The cowardly tribe of the Abazie attempted to beguile our old men, our wives, and children ; but swiftly, as the deer flying before the arrow of the huntsman, we pursued them. As rapidly as an eagle seizes a lamb and mounts above the clouds, we cut off their retreats, destroyed their habitations, took possession of their wealth, fettered their hands, and are now returning to our own country.”

“ Why have you taken so long and circuitous a route ? ”

“ In order to avoid the perfidious attacks of their allies.”

“ You must have lost many of your flocks.”

“ A great number are scattered in the desert, and many have rolled to the bottom of the chasms which bordered the winding and slippery paths. Others, passing on the bridges which broke under them, fell into precipices.”

“ The tribe must have suffered much.”

“ Yes ; the rough roads wore out our shoes, and the bloody traces of our footsteps are left on our paths. The briars and thorns, which obstructed our way through

the forests, tore our garments, left us only the fur linings, and thereby exposed us to the rigorous cold. Our resting-place was the snow or ice ; we have cruelly suffered."

"Have you lost many of your companions?"

"Alas ! the bodies of some were swept away by the cold, deep waters, which we were obliged to swim ; others have been buried under the falling avalanche ; many lie without sepulture in the deep pits ; and the frozen bodies of a great number still serve as food for the wild beasts which followed our steps. When we reached the delightful climate of this valley, and placed our feet on your ground, we said, 'Let us ask hospitality of this tribe. If they suffer us to erect our tents near their dwellings and rest our wearied forces, our flocks shall not browse upon the pastures ; our horses shall not trample their grain ; we will not destroy the blossoms which adorn their fruit trees ; we will respect the females, and caress the children upon their mothers' knees ; we will give them presents, and divide our spoils with them.' Illustrious chief, you have given us hospitality ; then you may rely upon our lasting gratitude."

Isram pressed the hand of Karem, and the whole assembly joined in loud shouts of pleasure and friendship.

When the guests were satisfied, overcome by fatigue, and sleep overpowering them, they prostrated themselves ; both those who worship God by the intercession of Christ and those who invoke him by the mediation of the Great Prophet turning themselves to-

wards the east. They with one accord addressed the Eternal a prayer of thanksgiving ; for they believed to offer him by the diversity of their prayers an incense of sweet odor, as agreeable to him as it is to us to inhale the perfume of a parterre filled with a variety of fragrant flowers.

CHAPTER IV.

JULIA ENTREATING KAREM FOR PRISONERS.



WHILE the others were rejoicing, Julia was sad ; her eyes were swimming in tears ; her gaze was fixed on a multitude cast down by suffering, led in captivity, and separated from the crowd as leprous. They were, it is true, sheltered under tents, but not at liberty ; they were present at the banquet, but in quality of slaves ; their hands were loaded with chains, and their heads turned from their oppressors.

Those men were silent ; their heads bowed down ; their visages meagre ; their countenances inanimate ; their eyes fixed upon the earth. Their vestments hung in rags ; their feet were bruised, and the blood was running from their wounds ; their wearied bodies sought support. Who would have recognized in them the impetuous Abazes, free in their own country as the eagle in the heavens ?

At the thought of their homes, they were withering

as the branches severed from their trunk. A file corrodes iron ; so captivity was corroding the manliness of their souls.

Isram comprehended the sadness of Julia, and suffered in silence ; but the young Karem remarked it to his father, who said to her, —

“ Daughter of Isram, will you allow me to make a request of you ? ”

“ O chief of the Lesquis, it is sufficient to let me know your wishes.”

“ Reveal to us the cause of the deep sadness which your gracious smile veils.”

“ Alas ! how can I be gay ? ”

“ Why not, when the joy of the tribes is so great ? ”

“ I could wish to participate in their joy, but —— ”

“ Finish, Julia, and speak your thoughts.”

“ It is that, near us, I see a whole multitude that are unhappy.”

“ Too generous girl, why are you affected by the fate of those men, who are our enemies ? The same evils with which they wished to oppress us have fallen upon themselves.”

“ Ah, Karem, happy are those who have never known slavery ; who have always lived in the land of their nativity, and never been thrown among strangers. The maternal caress, early love, the tenderness of a wife, the sweet effusions of friendship, the smiles of the new born, make life flow so sweetly ! But, alas ! those sweets will be to these unfortunates but bitter recollections. They are in chains. Their sufferings will not have an echo in any heart. Beloved lips will never again imprint a kiss upon their foreheads. They

will live without hope, and die alone, far from their friends and home. O, how much happier are their brothers in exile, whose bodies are scattered on the frozen mountains!"

"Still, Julia, I cannot set them at liberty."

"Noble chief, you can at least ameliorate their condition, and that will relieve my heart of the weight which oppresses it."

"Speak, and your wishes to me shall be commands."

"Let me offer consolation to your prisoners, and relieve them of those heavy chains."

"Go, Julia; it is worthy of you to give happiness. I invest you with my authority."

"Your words restore me to happiness."

She arose, and flew like an arrow, followed by a crowd of young girls, who were influenced by her example, and participated in her noble sentiments. She organized succors, and soon after the fetters fell from the arms of the captives, and they were comfortably clothed. The sick, who had been extended on the grass, were placed in warm beds; their wounds were no longer covered with blood, but washed and dressed. Smiles, to which they had long been strangers, again appeared on the lips of the Abazes.

CHAPTER V.

CONVERSATION OF JULIA WITH A PRISONER.



At a short distance, a prisoner, covered with rags, and his face hid in his hands, was seated immovable on a stone. No one sympathized in his sorrows; even his fellow prisoners did not regard him as a companion in exile, for he was cast outside of their ranks. The daughter of Isram observed and hurriedly approached him. His destitution touched her, and his forsaken condition interested her. She softly lifted his head, but started back in surprise. The power of his look and the nobleness of his traits revealed a distinguished birth. The furrows on his brow, the pallor of his cheeks, and the cold but energetic expression of his features, told that he was a great victim of adversity. She could but admire his large black eyes, his teeth white as ivory, and his long beard, black as ebony, which fell upon his breast.

"Noble captive," said she, "let me relieve you of these chains."

At these words, large tears rolled from his eyes; he addressed to Heaven one of those mute but burning apostrophes, one of those expressions which the Divinity loves — "Messenger of the Eternal, in whose cause I labor, tell me the name of this angel, who comes to liberate me."

"I am not an angel," replied Julia; "I am the granddaughter of Isram, the chief of the Ossetes."

"If you are not an angel of heaven, you are one of those whom God sometimes grants to the earth; for who but an angel would visit a prisoner whom even the *Helots* repulse as a *Pariah*?"

"God did not create you for slavery. Tell me the country of your birth, the name of your father, and that by which you were called in infancy."

"My country is too far distant for you to know it; the name of my father would also be unknown to you; but I remember, when playing upon his knees, he called me the young Paul."

"What unlucky fate has thrown you with this barbarous people, so far from your kindred? What evil genius has heaped upon you such severity?"

"A good God;" and, heaving a deep sigh, he said in a low voice, "He gives to the lily its whiteness, to the lamb its nourishment, and to me, who love him — I stop and adore ——." Then, glancing at Julia, he added, "Yes, a good God."

"Ah, if you were a Christian!"

"I am a Christian."

A mysterious expression suffused his countenance; he fell into a deep revery; his limbs trembled; his respiration became deep and labored; and his bosom heaved under the weight which oppressed it.

Julia, unable longer to restrain her emotions, stooped to disengage his chains, washed them with her tears, and in a celestial voice addressed him in these words: —

“Interesting captive, how unhappy am I to have created in your soul such painful sensations, or, rather, to have revived such vivid regrets! Ah, if you wish a heart in which to pour the fulness of yours, mine is open to you. Courage, then!”

“Dost thou speak of courage, daughter of Isram? I have already a superabundance. I am still young; but already a wanderer disgusted with the voyage of life. Yet I die not. I feel that I love God and mankind. But at the word *Christian*, all my past life, with its bitterness, crowds my memory, and my frame trembles. You wish me to relate my sorrows; but I could scarcely commence the recital before the Lesguis would roll again their tents, and drive me before them as a slave. Then I should leave you; and, in having disengaged my hands for a few hours, sympathized in my grief, you will have bound my soul in a heavy and hard chain — that of remembrance.”

“Young captive, I can liberate you. On these mountains you will find a second home; in Julia a sister, in Isram a father.”

“Ah! compassionate girl, your words have filled my soul with both sadness and joy.”

“Why does such an offer sadden you?”

"O God, why cannot I receive my liberty upon such sweet conditions? Why does a sacred barrier forbid it?"

"A sacred barrier forbid it! Reveal this mystery to her who would be your liberator."

Paul was about to speak, when Julia observed that the young Karem, who had been surveying the tents of the Lesguis, approached her. "Dear captive," said she, "have confidence." She then left him.

CHAPTER VI.

WAKEFULNESS OF A PRISONER.



THE moon was silently sinking in the west ; her pale rays, gliding through the foliage, rested upon the green-sward. By her clear light were seen, in the distance, gigantic pines, whose shadows, like dark phantoms, bordered the top of an abrupt declivity. Light clouds were floating above their heads ; being driven by the wind, they formed a moving curtain, behind which the mountains seemed to fly. In other parts the heavens were serene, and, under their azure dome, the points of rock were discernible, traced in irregular festoons. Here, a block was cut in girandole ; there, a spire pierced the clouds ; and elsewhere, a colossal column was inclined as a man praying. On another side, projecting angles and a wide gap resembled the mouth of a Chimæra ; and farther down, a vast opening seemed to disclose the lowest depths of the mountain.

To the inhabitants of the valley each of these ob-

jects were monumental or symbolical. One represented a mosque, the other a minaret. One reminded them of Mahomet praying, the other this prophet retiring from the society of men to a solitary grotto, communing with the Most High, and receiving the sublime revelation contained in the Koran. To each they had given a name.

Quiet was the scene in the valley. No lowing of flocks was heard; men forgot their cares in the arms of sleep; even the flowers of the fields had shut their petals in repose. Nothing was heard but the moaning of the winds through the branches of the trees, the fall of the cascades upon the rocks, the rushing of the torrents, and the murmur of the brooks seeking the prairie.

Only two living beings animated the scene—the nightingale, which, hid in the branches, from time to time made the air vibrate with its solemn and sonorous voice, with its pleasing modulations, and its harmonious accents, and the captive, whom Julia had left seated on a stone. The one proclaimed his joy, the other recounted in a low tone his sufferings; the one warbled his love, the other indulged his grief.

“Happy child of nature,” murmured the prisoner, “the heavens and the earth are thy domain, the universe thy country. O, sing thy freedom! At the first dawn of day thou takest thy flight, and floatest softly on the air. Wandering in the immense plains, thou findest *pâturage*. If scorched by the burning rays of the sun, thou descendest to the shade, and there makest choice of thy food, although thou neither sowest nor reapest. Thou formest thy resting-place in the

thickest foliage, lovest and rearest thy little ones, and in melodious accents makest known thy happiness. Those whom Providence has given thee for brothers never mar thy pleasures, are not jealous of thy plumage, never dispute with thee the sprigs of grass with which thou fashionest thy nest, never rob thee of the grains which thou gatherest in the fields; thou and thy fellow-beings live like children of one family, and are happy because you love each other; ambition has never engendered tyrants among you.

“God created me free as thou, and endowed me with a sublime soul, for it was from my first parents that thou receivedst a name. But my brothers have pierced me with wounds, and loaded me with chains. O God, why not send an angel to deliver me as thou didst to Peter in captivity?”

“I am that angel,” said a sweet voice.

And the prisoner heard a rustling of garments on the grass.

“Put on these light shoes — throw this mantle over your shoulders — keep silence. Let us fly.”

CHAPTER VII.

THE LESGUIIS LEAVE THE VALLEY. — THE OSSETES INTEND TO ATTACK THEM. — JULIA HAS DISAPPEARED. — EXPLANATION.



NE morning the trumpet of departure sounded among the Lesguis. After exchanging presents with their hospitable friends, they took with joy the road leading to their own country. They reached the top of the mountain, and were descending the opposite side, when, suddenly, they heard the trampling of horses and vociferated outcries of fury, and they saw an army crowning the summit of the mountain. It was the Ossetes.

“Let their blood redden the torrents!” And the sound was reëchoed on all sides. “Let their carcasses fatten the earth! Let the vultures tear their flesh! Let the wolves gnaw their bones. They have abused our hospitality!”

“To arms!” cried the Lesguis; “the Ossetes are traitors. They gave us hospitality the more surely to surprise us. They wish to slaughter us, and enrich themselves with our spoils. To arms!” And they formed their lines for battle.

Several captains descended the mountain, their

eyes flashing with indignation, their mouths foaming with rage, and their hearts thirsting for vengeance. Karem presented himself calm and fearless.

"Chief of the Lesguis," said the captains, "you are an ungrateful people."

"We an ungrateful people! Explain yourselves."

"Yes; yourself, your son, and your tribe."

"Please explain yourselves!"

"Have you been heartily received among us?"

"Yes, as brothers."

"Have you not partaken of our cottages, our chases, our banquets, our sports, and all our rejoicings?"

"Yes, and our hearts will keep for you a lasting gratitude."

"A lasting gratitude! And yet ——"

"What?"

"Isram invited you to share his fireside, you and your son; and you have stained it."

"My son and I have stained the fireside of Isram! If I would forget your kindness, and would yield only to my indignation ——!" Saying so, Karem involuntarily seized his sword.

At that sign, the tribes ranged for the battle.

"You have injured us."

"By what crime?"

"You know it."

"I do not."

"By dishonoring Isram."

"We have dishonored Isram! Isram, who possesses our veneration, gratitude, and love! We would shed for him all our blood! But, in fine, hasten. By what crime have we dishonored Isram?"

"By the crime of the seducers. Would you witness his affliction!"

"Which woman have we ravished?"

"His daughter."

On these words Karem turned pale; his features expressed stupor and sorrow.

"Great God! They have ravished Julia?"

"It is said that your son is culpable."

"Would it be true!"

He calls for the young Karem.

"My son, you are accused of having ravished Isram's daughter."

"I?"

His face expressed indignation; his eyes became fiery.

"I ravished the daughter of Isram? At this idea the blood boils in my veins. I tremble with horror!" and turning to the captains, —

"Are you my accusers?"

"All our tribe. You loved her, and she has disappeared."

"I did not see her. Even in leaving the valley, I looked for her, — alas! in vain, — to bid her a last and too cruel adieu. When did she disappear?"

"During the night; and you alone and your father were in the house of Isram."

"I am not guilty of this crime. My father and all our tribe can certify my innocence."

"I believe that my son is not the ravisher. But let us inquire together, and if in our camp we find him, let Isram require from us a just satisfaction; we will put ourselves in his hands."

The Ossetes, who for many hours waited for an answer, trampled with impatience and fury.

"They will not deliver Julia," the soldiers vociferated; "they have concealed her. Our captains do not return. They have murdered them."

Their indignation swelled as the waves of a tempestuous sea. The chiefs being unable to restrain their violence, they rushed against the Lesguis. Their glittering swords were crossed, when Karem and the captains threw themselves between the combatants, crying, "Desist."

At that moment, two men presented themselves, and asked to communicate some important intelligence to the chief.

"Who are you?" demanded he.

"Ossetes hunters."

"Whence come you?"

"From a distant chase. Being informed that Isram's daughter had been carried off, and that a bloody war was about to ensue between the tribes, we have come to inform you, that last night, in the forest, we saw something like dark shadows passing in the road, and heard, a moment after, a rustling in the leaves."

"In what road? in what forest?"

"In the mountain, on the other side of the valley."

"Sheathe your swords," exclaimed Karem and the captains. "We will not take food until we have pierced the heart of this ravisher, and taken Julia back to her father."

CHAPTER VIII.

SCENE IN A GROTTO OF THE MOUNTAIN.



At a retired spot, in the thickest part of the wood, is a deep cave: a large gate closes the entrance. Above are immense rocks, covered by lofty, tapering pines, seeming to form conical stairs, which penetrate the clouds. The ivy, with its numerous tendrils, covers the surface of the grotto, and twines in festoons around the flowing cytisus. The stocks of the virgin vine extend their knotty twigs; the eglantine

and an infinite variety of small shrubs grow under the branches. The white daisy and the modest violet serve as a resting-place for the convolvulus, whose endless creeping stems form a network covered with wild flowers. At a short distance is a green square, surrounded by a wooden trellis raised waist high, enclosing two tombs. Within the enclosure are grassy knolls, artistically arranged, bordered by ever-blooming flowers; among which the heart's ease, emblem of death, and other mourning flowers of purple hue. At the foot of these tombs grow two cypresses of different ages, and, near them, a weeping willow, whose long,

green branches float in disorder. Outside of this enclosure is seen the fire tree with its crimson plumes waving gracefully in the air. In the wide extent are oaks ancient as the world, shading with their many branches the small pliant shrubs and creeping briers; the blindweed, whose numerous fibres pierce the tufts of moss which grow upon their trunks, derive from them support, partake of their existence, and die upon their bosoms.

At a short distance was a young man, with wan and pallid countenance, reclining upon a bench formed of boards, and supported by two posts driven in the ground. Suddenly he heard a slight noise, and a glimmering light in the grotto attracted his attention. It was a young girl, who had kindled a sepulchral lamp. She went out hurriedly, and gathered from the rocks and trunks of the trees a pile of dry lichen and moss, spread it upon the ground, and covered it with dry leaves, which had accumulated there during the autumn. Then she assisted the young man, and conducted him to this place of repose; washed his wounds with limpid water; and from a light basket, which she had woven of the finest straw, she took an odoriferous balsam, spread it upon his wounds, and bound them up with soft bandages. To protect him from the cold, she threw over him a large mantle, which covered him completely; then seated herself upon a projecting rock. Her ingenuous air, the frankness and innocence of her looks, the calm and melancholy pleasure which overspread her countenance, all in her that breathed of modesty, showed that she tasted that happiness which the just experience in the performance of good actions

that felicity which fills the bosoms of those blessed souls created for virtue, and to bestow happiness. Her eyes were fixed upon this unfortunate, extended upon this rude couch, without motion, or power to express his gratitude. She said to him, with a sweet, celestial smile, —

“Alas! unhappy captive, I am at a loss for words of consolation to soothe your sufferings.”

It was Julia speaking to Paul. He did not reply; for they had in their flight taken circuitous paths, walked almost all night, and he was scarcely able to reach this retreat. He was completely exhausted, and insensible to every thing but his misery.

When the first dawn of morning appeared, and Julia had supplied the wants of Paul, she arose to leave, and return unperceived to the paternal roof. Starting out of the cave she heard a great noise. The gate opened, and a crowd of men entered hastily. By the light of a flambeau, she perceived the young Karem. Terrified, she shrieked.

“What! Julia! Here is the ravisher! And he is one of the prisoners! Let him die!”

He raised his sword. Julia precipitated herself before him, crying, “Mercy! he is innocent.” She caught the arm of Karem, and fell senseless upon the earth.

CHAPTER IX.

SCENE BETWEEN KAREM AND ISRAM.



HORSEMAN was dismounting before the cottage of Isram.

"Isram! Isram!"

"Karem! and my daughter!"

"She will soon be restored to your love."

"Where was she?"

"In a grotto, amidst thick woods."

"Near a graveyard?"

"Yes; I have seen several tombs."

"What! during the night? Did she pray?"

"No."

"Was she alone?"

"No."

"Speak, Karem."

"With her ——"

"O, finish!"

"Forgive, Isram; my son is not the ravisher; my tribe is not guilty; but ——"

"Explain yourself, Karem."

"Alas!"

"O, speak, Karem!"

"She was with one of our prisoners." And a dark

anxiety, a deep affliction, were painted on the face of Isram.

"Great God!" he exclaimed; "would she have stained my white hair?"

"Perhaps not," responded Karem; "he was lying on a couch when I saw the poniard of my son directed to his breast."

"And my daughter!"

CHAPTER X.

EVENTS IN THE GROTTO.



THE tribes were plunged in the deepest consternation. The people talked to each other of her with sorrow; they did not dare inquire about Julia. They whispered to each other, —

“What! the angel of virtue! the virgin of the valley! the consolation and glory of her grandfather!”

Isram and Karem coming, the crowd drew back with a mournful silence. They entered into the grotto, and saw the young Karem, who bore on his arms Julia fainting. The face of the old man turned pale, and his lips became tremulous; big tears fell from his eyes.

“What, Julia!”

“Ah! my grandfather.”

“Speak.”

“I have been a victim ——”

“Of this ravisher,” sighed the young Karem; and with a fiery glance he lifted his poniard over his head.

“Mercy — he is innocent ——”

"Speak, Julia."

"I alone am guilty."

"Great God!"

"He is as pure as the sky, and my virginity is as white as the feather of the swan."

"I thank God."

"Karem, plunge your sword into my bosom; I have violated the laws of hospitality."

"What! my daughter!"

"I saw a prisoner who spoke the language of the Greeks; he was not an Abaze. I believed he was unjustly fettered, and was about to die; then I resolved to give him liberty and life. Look at him, dying on this poor couch. Kill me, Karem, but spare his days. Listen to the granddaughter of Isram, who, on her knees, supplicates you, washes your feet with her tears, and raises towards you her feeble hands."

And turning to Isram, she added, —

"For a last favor, O unfortunate grandfather! Do not curse Julia. Forgive her on account of her commiseration for an unhappy captive, and bless her dying."

"O Heaven!"

"Arise, Julia. For your sake I grant life to this prisoner, and restore him to liberty. Why have you not asked his deliverance? You had not to expect from me a refusal. Isram, forgive your daughter as I forgive her. She is not guilty; she has been only too magnanimous."

"Come, dear Julia, and kiss your grandfather."

And the two tribes rejoiced. The warriors and the young women bore Julia in triumph to the valley.

The people repeated with enthusiasm her heroical deed, and shouted, that she was yet the virgin of the valley, the consolation and glory of her grandfather. Not one uttered a single word to charge her with temerity.

Having reached the cottages, the two tribes renewed their oath of a lasting fraternity; and, when the Les-guis took again the route of the mountains, the two people shouted, "We are forever allied and brothers."

A youth wept. It was the son of Karem, who, till he reached the top of the mountain, turned often, glancing at the valley. He was hopeless, and still bore in the depth of his heart a burning spear.

CHAPTER XI.

VISIT TO THE GROTTTO OF THE TOMBS.



He left Paul extended on his couch, motionless and without strength. The sword had gleamed above his head; he saw it not. A touching scene had taken place in the grotto; he heard it not. He was taken on a litter to the house of Isram, where he was momentarily expected to breathe his last sigh; but the assiduous cares of Julia had recalled him to life, and he soon regained his health. The agreeable and courteous

manners of Paul, his modesty, and above all his noble sentiments, excited in Isram a warm interest for his misfortunes. Indeed, all the tribe sympathized with him, and did not wish him to leave the valley

On one occasion, Julia requested him to accompany her to the Grotto of the Tombs, (which, since, the Ossetes called the Grotto of Refuge.) "I wish to pray near the ashes of my father," said she. They departed; and as they went, Julia recounted to him the sad inci

dents attending his deliverance. After the recital, which deeply moved him, he said to her, —

“Why did you not leave me in chains? Dying a captive would have been for me far preferable to a bitter existence. Then you would have been an angel sent by God to guide me from earth to heaven, and I would not have caused you so much trouble.”

“Have confidence, Paul. Providence will guard you. I am compensated for my sufferings by having given you life and liberty.”

“How could you sacrifice your repose, and confide your honor to a stranger, an abandoned of God, the outcast of a barbarous people?”

“Because I read in your face what had been written by the Eternal — nobleness of soul, elevation of thoughts, and magnanimity of sentiments. O, say not you are an abandoned of God! Did not Christ sweat drops of blood in the Garden of Olives? Did he not exhaust to the dregs the cup of gall and wormwood? Yet a voice from heaven proclaimed him the beloved of his Father.”

At these words the face of Paul brightened, and he seemed happy.

“Your mouth, daughter of Isram, exhales consolation as the flower its perfume; but your lips are too flattering when they give praise. I know the disciple is not above his master. Although my body is pressed by suffering as the iron by the vice of the mechanic — my soul beaten by adversity as the cloth by the fuller’s hammer — I have not to complain. Did not the heavens hear the Savior in uttering these sad words? ‘Father, if it be possible, take away this cup

from me. My soul is exceeding sorrowful, unto death.' Then angels came and ministered to him. Have I not an angel before me, who raised me up when I was without hope, rescued me from servitude, and gives me now that nectar of which I had not hoped to drink but at the table of the elect? O, how much I desire to know how you formed the plan of my deliverance! What inspired you with such generous devotion?"

"I will relate it to you, grateful Paul.

"The sight of your misfortunes touched my heart, and immediately I conceived the design of liberating you. On beholding you, I said, 'This young captive has not always lived in these mountains; a woman of the little Abazie has not given him life; but a lady of European birth, in rich attire and flowing robe, has imprinted the first kiss upon his lips, and received his first sigh. All in him shows that he is the child of the city.' When you addressed me in the language of the Greeks, which Isram was taught by his mother in infancy, but has never forgotten, and by his assiduous teaching made familiar to me, I thought that you, perhaps, were a native of the same clime; that by some great misfortune you had been thrown among the Abazes, and by a still greater one you had been made prisoner. I felt within me the inspiration as it were of an invisible being, and yielded to the attraction which was seconded by my own heart."

A blush suffused the face of Julia. She then added, "Behold, Paul, why I feared nothing, and confronted all obstacles to save you."

Julia paused, and seemed preoccupied by some secret and mysterious reflections, some sad recollections.

"But," said Paul, "why, alone and at night, did you expose yourself to so hazardous an enterprise?"

"My slumbers were unquiet; a strange dream disturbed them. In an obscure place, I saw a spectre advancing towards me, his feet dragging chains. He drew near to me, and said, in a low, sepulchral tone, 'How heavy are my irons!' I tried to scream, but my lips were mute. I made an effort to fly, but my limbs refused their office; the shadow fled away, a bright light shone about me, a supernatural being appeared, his head encircled by a shining halo, his countenance celestial, and his body transparent. From his gilded lips fell these words: 'Fear nothing; my daughter, do not shrink from your father.'

"I was frightened, and my eyes were dazzled.

"'I inhabit the beatific regions of the blest, where reigns an eternal spring. I dwell in the palace of happiness, where hearts never suffer, but always love. From the height of this enchanted place, unknown to mortals, I saw in this valley a child of misery, a martyr to virtue, whose name is registered with the elect. Immediately, borne on light wings, I traversed the heavens, and came to tell you, daughter of Isram, if you are worthy of your father, deliver this elected of God from captivity. The most favorable moment is the hour of silence.'

"The luminous cloud became fainter and fainter, until it gradually disappeared. I sprang towards my father; but an invisible hand was placed upon my heart, and the blood froze in my veins. I strove to speak, but I could

not. I made an effort to seize him, but my hands could not touch him. I tried to weep, but not a tear fell from my eyes. Then, in an effort of despair, I dilated my breast; I drew a deep sigh, and I awoke starting. I was panting and exhausted by fatigue, as a wrestler just from the arena; drops of cold perspiration stood upon my face, and all my limbs were trembling. Seized with a sudden inspiration, I exclaimed, 'Yes, my father, I know how to deliver this captive. I will do it. He awaits me.' I silently left my couch and the paternal roof, and swiftly approached the tents of the Lesguis, which were disposed in long and irregular lines. Clouds of curling smoke, arising from the still burning cinders, veiled my steps by their obscurity; and some bundles of burning straw, emitting a flame, facilitated my examination. By this dim light, I glided to the tents of the prisoners, who were quietly extended upon the grass: the guards and soldiers, wrapped in warm furs, slept profoundly."

"Too generous Julia," said Paul, interrupting her, 'to what dangers you were exposed!'"

She continued: —

"My restless eyes sought you, but in vain. 'If he was with the prisoners,' thought I, 'how can his flight be concealed? Perhaps he reposes near the stone where I left him.' I went to an elevated landmark that separated two estates. From there I distinguished, at a short distance, something which appeared to be the trunk of a tree overthrown by the tempest. 'That may be he,' said I; and I drew near; I then saw you."

"O Julia, you appeared to me not like a daughter of earth, but a virgin who had passed her life in the

relief of mankind ; had obtained a suspension of happiness to descend from paradise in order to appear to men for a few short hours, and deliver them from trials. God alone can recompense your generosity. He alone can appreciate my gratitude."

Julia and Paul arrived at the grotto, which recalled such painful, yet pleasing recollections. They knelt in prayer. As Julia bent over the grave of her father, a pallor overspread her countenance ; the smile faded from her lips, and tears flowed from her eyes ; her silence was interrupted by sobs. The sight of her grief afflicted Paul, and he addressed her in these words : —

"Why weep, my benefactress ? Does not prayer relieve the heart ?"

"It is at the recollection of what my mother, all in tears, once said to me — 'Dear child, follow me. I wish to visit that place so endeared to me. I want to weep and pray.'

"I accompanied her to the tomb ; we knelt ; she, with a trembling hand, gave me a branch of cypress, and bade me plant it, saying, —

" 'My daughter, you have seen the trees of the valley bloom for the seventh time ; your intellect, it is true, is not fully developed, but your mind is capable of retaining a deep recollection. During your life, this shall be to you a memorable event. The cypress will increase in size ; you will also grow ; but, as you advance in age, never forget that where you planted this cypress the ashes of your father lie. My days are not numerous ; however, were I not necessary to you, my sorrows would long since have cut the thread of my

existence. When my life shall close, do not forget to bury me near your father.'

"She wept bitterly. I sympathized with her, and the roots of the cypress were watered by our tears."

"You were very young when you lost him. Have you any recollection of your father?"

"I remember when evening came, and he suspended the labors of the day, or when, fatigued by a long chase, he returned and took his place at the fireside, I threw myself into his arms, mounted his knees, relieved his mind, and gave him joy by my caresses and infantile prattle. He often said to my mother, —

"'How dear to me is my Julia! When grown up, I will conduct her into the fields, bend her bow, and teach her to fly the arrow. Together on the mountains we will pursue the swift deer. Seated at midday on the pliant ferns, sheltered by the foliage, we will take our frugal repast. Above our heads the forest birds will chant their merry songs, the rippling brook will roll at our feet, from whence we will fill our hunter's gourd to quench our thirst.'

"But, alas! he did not lead me to the field; his hand did not string my bow, nor teach me to fly the arrow. Never together did we pursue the wild deer, nor take our repast under the shade near the running brook. Ah, with what sad regrets the thought of my father's death fills me!"

"Julia, your filial piety is worthy of admiration. I comprehend the extent of your sorrows, by that which your words have made me feel. I can appreciate the deep affliction your loss caused you by the sad picture you have drawn, and my voice unites with yours in

saying the death of your father merits unceasing regrets. But will you always remain inconsolable? Has not Providence left you one whose wisdom guides your steps?"

"Yes; but can Isram replace my mother? Look at that cypress, which has scarcely taken root, that is planted over the tomb of her whose remains seem still palpitating. And you wish me to be consoled! Ah, I think I still see that open grave where her coffin was placed, from which I was taken heart-broken. I heard, in the distance, the funeral knell and a dismal sound; it was caused by the grave-digger throwing the clods of earth upon her coffin."

Here sobs choked her utterance, and her tears flowed more abundantly.

"Julia, time heals the wounds of the heart. Isram will give you in marriage ——"

Paul pronounced these words in a faltering voice, and did not dare to finish. A deep sigh, as of despair, betrayed his feeling.

Julia, after a moment of silence, raised her eyes to Paul, then, casting them down, said, —

"I bear in my heart a too dear image."

"Julia, how painful is memory!"

Then, silently and sadly they returned to the valley, giving mysterious interchanges on the way.

CHAPTER XII.

PAUL COMMENCES AN ACCOUNT OF HIS LIFE.



NE of those beautiful days of spring, when the sun fertilizes the earth with his mild and genial heat, Isram, Julia, and Paul had taken their meal under the shade of some fine trees. The more the old man and his daughter studied Paul, the more they wished to know of him. They conducted him to an elevated situation, where the mountains were presented to the view like floating drapery.

They seated themselves on the grass, and desired him to relate the history of his life and misfortunes. At first, Paul was moved ; but emotion gave place to assurance, and he spoke thus : —

“ I was born in Greece, of Catholic parents. Basilos was the name of my father. Without being opulent, he was still possessed of a considerable fortune. He had filled many of the most important offices ; he had been raised to dignities and honors, and was universally respected and esteemed for his many virtues. A devoted citizen, he had sacrificed a part of his wealth, and fought

for his country, when generous allied countries were in arms to save it. A fond husband, he made my mother happy; a tender father, he devoted himself to the interests of his children. His talents and virtues made him the glory of his country, the delight and support of his family.

“When weaned from my mother’s first cares, he commenced the formation of my mind and heart. Afterwards, to superintend better my education and instruction, he sent me to an ecclesiastical college. When I had finished my first studies, and he thought me capable of guiding myself in the world, he sent me to Naples to complete my education, to extend my learning, and determine by observation what career I should choose in order to be the most useful to my country and society.

“I received his instructions, listened to the advice of my mother, made my adieus, embraced my family, and embarked on board a merchant ship. The weather being favorable, we reached in a few days the coast of Naples, which I was so often to explore in my solitary rambles. Never, no, never can I forget what I there experienced.

“Capri was before us with its steep shores, and rich plains covered with vines, olives, myrtle, and almond trees. Ischia and Prosida presented their gray mountains, whose crests bristled with crags, whose *aride* sides were planted with many rare shrubs. Before us appeared the harbor, in the form of an immense basin, filled with shipping, which brought to Naples, from all parts of the world, the riches of the universe. The neighboring country presented a beautiful prospect.

The quays and promenades, delineated in circular lines, limited the horizon. At our right, Vesuvius vomited forth its lurid flame, sometimes veiled by a column of curling black smoke, which, blown by the wind, scattered its cinders like rain upon our deck. The lava gushed from the crater with a thundering sound, which shook the mountain. The port was seen at a distance, its many masts shooting upwards. Above the city, the church steeples, palace towers, and domes of the monuments seemed to disappear in the azure of the sky. Never had nature appeared to me so magnificent and imposing; never had the industry of man seemed so active, nor the works of his hands so admirable.

“My emotions succeeded each other like lightning. Admiration and awe, joy and sadness, pleasure and pain, confidence and doubt, contended with my heart. A thousand thoughts assailed me; and, above all, I could not divest myself of a mysterious presentiment which weighed upon my spirit, that Naples was to be to me the scene of some dark and terrible event; that my life would be tumultuous, and I should be driven by its influence as the cedars of the mountain by the tempest. Whilst absorbed by these reveries, we were borne rapidly before the wind, and in a few moments we entered the port.

“I was then in that immense city whose beautiful sky has given it the title of Paradise of Europe. I saw a multitude of men of different manners and customs who had come from all parts of the world to pay their tribute of admiration to this the Queen of Cities. I wandered in its streets and squares, bordered by palaces, modest residences, and hovels, showing the de-

plorable proximity of wealth and poverty. I was borne on by the tide of population as it hastily flowed along. The poor elbowed the rich, who, by their silk attire, seemed to mock their tattered dress. The great displayed before the indigent their splendid equipages, their liveries, and attendants. Carried out by fleet steeds, they broke through the crowd, and passed like arrows before the unfortunate, who envied their lot, and walked sorrowful. I heard, from under the gilded ceiling, instruments of music and songs of joy. It was the sound of the children of fortune at splendid festivities, seated around tables served with delicious meats and wines. At the same time, not daring to seat himself at the portal, stood a mendicant, begging, in a trembling voice, a morsel of bread to appease his hunger, and a little water to allay his thirst. So much magnificence and misery, so much profusion and privation, so much pleasure and sorrow at first saddened me; but being born in affluence, my imagination young and lively, and my heart desirous of enjoyment, this sentiment was transitory. I shed a few tears at the fate of so many destitute of fortune; but unable to assist, I turned from them.

CHAPTER XIII.

PAUL MEETS WITH A MONK.



WILL not attempt, venerable chief, to give you the history of several years I passed in Naples. It will be sufficient to relate the events which gave another course to my ideas, and totally changed my existence.

“One evening I received a letter; the seal was black. Trembling I opened it, and read these words:—

“‘MY DEAR PAUL: I am commissioned to give you this painful intelligence. Our father has just died. In his last moments he called for you, that you might receive his benediction; that you might be present at his last sigh, and close his dying eyes. He expired with your name upon his lips. O, come, at least, you, the eldest son of the family, to console your brothers and sisters; to draw our mother from her despair.

Your affectionate brother,

JOHN BASILOS.’

"The paper dropped from my hands ; I felt like fainting. That night was for me endless and cruel ; and I was for many days the prey of the deepest sadness and melancholy.

"One morning I left the city, and went to the country around, seeking solitude. I was for many hours wandering in a forest, when, yielding to fatigue, I sat on the trunk of a tree, which had fallen under the axe of the woodman. My head rested on my hands ; I wept. Alas ! it was there that the drama of the last years of my youth closed so unexpectedly ; there events occurred which brought me to your country. Suddenly I felt a hand on my shoulder. I raised my eyes, and saw a monk, with austere appearance ; but his face still betrayed marks of sensibility and kindness.

"'What !' he said, 'you weep, young Neapolitan. Though in the spring of your life, you know suffering.'

"'Yes, reverend father,' I answered.

"'However, your age is the first step in life ; life appears bloomy ; its happiness seems to be endless. O, I should feel happy if I was allowed to relieve you !'

"'To relieve me ? My sorrow is too deep.'

"'Grant me leave to say, that, inexperienced in the anxieties of life, you exaggerate their bitterness. You are like a soldier who turns pale and trembles when for the first time he meets with the enemy. You are that man who never defied danger, and sees it increasing like a nocturnal ghost.'

"'My loss is irreparable !'

"'Cheer up ! Time heals the wounds of the soul as well as it heals those of the body ; waves fill the void which waves dig ; with centuries valleys disappear ;

and years will teach you that life is a tide of suffering and pleasure; that the impressions are blotted out in the soul like the traces of a ship on water—like the traces of clouds in the sky. However, are we not all children of the same family? Can we not aid each other in partaking of our tribulations?’

“As I did not answer, but sighed heavily, he went back, saying, ‘Pardon my seeming intrusion, for I see that you want solitude.’

CHAPTER XIV.

SECOND INTERVIEW OF PAUL WITH THE MONK.



ON the following day, I met the monk several times in my solitary rambles ; but, as I seemed to avoid his company, he did not speak to me. On a certain day, he came and said to me, —

“ ‘ Young Neapolitan, moved with your affliction, every day I prayed for you, and came to this wood hoping to console you.’

“ ‘ Reverend father,’ I answered, ‘ I thank you.’

“ ‘ Are you less melancholy ?’

“ ‘ I still am inconsolable. I have not even a *friend* to offer words of consolation.’

“ ‘ Alas ! I am not astonished. In society you will not find one.’

“ ‘ I had many friends, who partook of my pleasures ; but as soon as they saw me in sorrow, they fled and forsook me.’

“ ‘ They did so because they were not truly your friends. You perhaps have already noticed that the title of friend is upon the lips of all ; yet how few intellects appreciate it ! and how few hearts feel the

obligations which it imposes upon them ! Friendship, which yet the Holy Ghost calls a precious stone, a treasure, is a prostitution in the mouths of men. Believe me, the monks and the priests are the only true friends here below.'

" 'I despair to find one.'

" 'Yet the human heart wants a friend. Christ had chosen St. John, whom he called his beloved disciple. Young Neapolitan, I know that you cannot consider me as a friend, for I am unknown to you ; still I am a priest, and a monk : perhaps these titles are deserving of your confidence. Trust in me ; honor me with your friendship, and you will never regret it.'

" 'Venerable chief, my spirits were so low, and my sorrows so deep, that I yielded to the want of opening my heart, and I said to him, that one of my brothers had given me the intelligence of the death of my father ; that my family was deeply afflicted, and my mother in the deepest sorrow.

" 'Your affliction,' he said, 'is very natural. By the death of your father, you have lost the support of your youth, the counsellor of your inexperience, the star which, in the order of Providence, was to guide you in life ; but you ought to yield to consolation, for death is a tax which every man has to pay to nature.'

" 'Of course ; but I am so young, and still am an orphan ! Why so soon has my father left this life ?'

" 'Others beside you have to complain. You are no more as a young eagle ; you can fly with your own wings. God has called back to himself your father, because the sun of his virtues had ripened him for heaven.'

"The monk, seeing that I gave up to my sorrow, said to me, —

" 'I partake of your suffering, for I have driven in the thorn which I fain would have extracted from your heart. By entreating you to relate to me your grief, I have caused you to drink the bitter water of a too fresh recollection. I have enlarged a wound whose lips are not yet closed up.'

" 'O,' I answered, 'who can relieve me, the loss of my father is to me so great?'

" 'God ; he is the Father of his creatures, and he cherishes his children. If he sends sorrow, he wipes tears ; if with one hand he wounds, with the other he heals. Man being the masterpiece of his hands, he cannot sink him into affliction, and let him struggle alone in the bottom of this gulf. O, no ; for he has counted every single hair of our head ; he loves us more than a mother can love her child ; he says so in the holy book. Therefore he will heal your evils, and will drop in your soul celestial consolations.'

" 'But I shall never again see my father : is this thought, which I shall bear always till I die, compatible with consolation?'

" 'Let me ask you if you are a Christian.'

" 'Yes, I am a Christian, and a Roman Catholic.'

" 'You ought to thank God, who granted you this great favor. Is not your belief a source of consolation for you ? Every man, it is true, has to die, for death is a punishment of our first father's sin ; but did not Christ, by coming again to life, give himself as the pledge of our future resurrection ? Did not God inspire the patriarch Job with this song of hope : "I

know that my Redeemer is living, and that in the last day I will live"? Had not Martha the same confidence when, weeping over the death of Lazarus, she consoled herself, saying, "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day"? Your father, young friend, will take on new life, and you will see him again.'

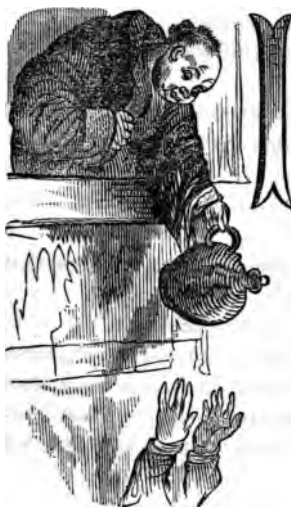
"The realization of a hope, though so doubtful and so far distant, could perhaps comfort me; but the thought of my family afflicted, and of my mother's despondency, still assails my mind. Moreover, who can replace my father?'

"Here below, no sorrow is endless. Your family and your mother will, with time, yield to consolation. As for you, trust in futurity; confide in God; he will give you a friend who to you will be a treasure. God is the Father of the orphan. He is the God who saved Moses from the waves, and freed Israel from Pharaoh's tyranny. He is the God who sent to Tobias an angel to guide him to Raguel's, in Mesopotamia. Believe me, he will take care of you; and from heaven he will send to you a friend who will replace your father.'

"I thanked the monk, and we parted.

CHAPTER XV.

THE MONK QUESTIONS PAUL.



SRAM, from my infancy, I had been taught that the priests are the lieutenants of God on earth; therefore the utterance of the monk had relieved me. Besides, I wanted so much to open my heart to some one, that a mere exposition of my grief would have afforded me comfort."

Here Paul turned to Isram and Julia, saying, —

"I will abridge my relation, lest by its being too wearisome, I abuse your *bonté*."

"Be not anxious, Paul," they replied. "We feel desirous to know, with all their circumstances, your interviews and conversations with the monk."

Paul thanked them, and continued: —

"One day, I went far from Naples, and walked thoughtfully along the sea shore. I was surprised, when raising my eyes, to see the monk, who was coming towards me. We saluted each other, and the following conversation took place.

"He put to me many questions, which seemed of the utmost indiscretion; but he proceeded with a dexterity so great, that politeness, and my deference for his sacerdotal and religious character, obliged me to answer.

" 'You, perhaps, are an Italian?' he asked me.

" 'No, reverend father,' I answered.

" 'But you are a European, are you not?'

" 'Yes, reverend father.'

" 'If it be not an impoliteness on my part, may I inquire in what place you were born?'

" 'In Greece.'

" 'Perhaps in Athens?'

" 'Yes, reverend father.'

" 'From your education and manners, I judge that you belong to a rich family.'

" 'Reverend father, you are not mistaken.'

" 'I am glad to congratulate you thereon; for wealth is a great blessing from Heaven. Wealth is an evident mark of the peculiar favor of God; it is the touchstone of wisdom and virtue: in proof thereof, God granted it to Solomon.'

" 'As I appeared very much surprised at this reflection, he asked me why.

" 'Because,' I answered, 'Jesus Christ has accursed wealth; because he has said, "Verily I say unto you, that a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven. And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God."'

" 'Well, young friend, but do not forget that he commissioned the priests to explain his doctrine.'

"This answer did not satisfy my mind; but knowing he was the lieutenant of God, I did not reply.

"Your father,' he continued, 'held undoubtedly a high station in society.'

"He at least was esteemed for his virtues.'

"Had he been promoted to dignities?'

"Yes, reverend father.'

"You, perhaps, are in Naples merely as a traveller?'

"No, reverend father.'

"You are very young to live far from the paternal roof. I suppose that it is only for a while; that you do not intend to make Naples your permanent home?'

"My father sent me to Naples to complete, in that city, my collegial studies. I would have, after a while, gone to Rome, where I would have studied painting and music; thence I would have returned home.'

"I approve very much, indeed, of the views of your father. I congratulate you about it; it is in Naples and Rome, those so eminently Catholic countries, that you can inform yourself about arts, and chiefly become initiated in the true political, social, and religious sciences. You will be afterwards allowed to be very influential for the triumph of our holy religion among your countrymen, and to fill the honorable offices to which you will be promoted.'

"I do not know what God reserves for me, for the death of my father has entirely changed my future prospects. Now I owe myself to my mother; and, as I am the eldest among my brothers and sisters, I owe myself to their education and instruction.'

“‘Did you attend the lectures in a college of Athens?’

“‘No, reverend father; I was educated in a college conducted by priests.’

“‘O, I feel happy with what you say! If you would appreciate how valuable is the favor which God granted to you, your thanks to him would be endless. The Holy Ghost alluded to the laymen’s universities, when he said, by the mouth of the holy King David, “Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.” The universities can give only a worldly science, leading astray the mind and corrupting the heart. The priests alone are commissioned by God to educate and teach youth; and, as they are his lieutenants on earth, to be educated and taught by them is to hold education and instruction from God himself.’

“‘As to me, reverend father, I have gathered from the teaching of the priests, my professors, only bad and bitter fruits.’

“‘My young friend, I am astonished at your saying; explain to me why, and in what manner.’

“‘Because they have not initiated me in the secrets of science; have given me only a superficial knowledge, without even putting in my hands the key of the sanctuary of learning, without enabling me to improve myself in studying privately.’

“‘You are mistaken. Why would they have not initiated you in the secrets of science?’

“‘Pardon me, reverend father, if I say so; it is because they are ignorant themselves.’

“ ‘Still their schools and colleges are the best.’

“ ‘They say so, but I, unfortunately, know the contrary by my own experience.’

“ ‘Young friend, though they could not teach the profane sciences, they should be praised for it, because it is written in the sacred book of Thomas à Kempis, “Science makes men proud.”’

“ ‘But the sciences which you term “*profane*” are useful, even indispensable in society.’

“ ‘The only indispensable science is that of the holy Roman religion.’

“ ‘Reverend father, suppose it be so ; why have they stopped the development of my intellect ? Why have they forbidden me to use my reason ? Why have they tyrannized over my heart by imposing upon it too heavy religious practices, and by restraining all its lawful propensities and feelings ?’

“ ‘Poor young man, how blind you are ! The priests, your teachers, have stopped the development of your intellect, because science would have led you astray to perdition ; they have forbidden you to use your reason, because our holy and only true church does not allow the faithful to think, judge, and believe for themselves, but binds them to mould their thoughts, judgments, and belief on those of the clergy. As to the direction of the propensities of your heart, they were right in tying it with strong bands. Remember that a young plant wants a solid tutor to grow straight.’

“ ‘Why, then, have they misled me by their exaggerations ?’

“ ‘From them it was wisdom, for the spear attains the blank only when the point of sight is raised up.

The sailor can stem a river only in oaring along the bank.'

" 'Although I was young, they had no right to disguise the truth, and to impose upon me too onerous practices.'

" 'Believe me, you are mistaken. I tell you so in the name of God. I repeat it; I congratulate you for having had priests for teachers. Had they taught you only the practices of religion, you should owe to them a lasting gratitude.'

" On these words I did not answer, from fear of being disrespectful by my persistency. Then the monk proceeded : —

" 'Young friend, I delight in the thought that you were a faithful practitioner of the religious principles which you have been taught.'

" 'I have neglected several practices and precepts of the church.'

" 'What! you, perhaps, have doubts on our holy faith?'

" 'Yes, reverend father. And the more I inquire and reflect about it, the more I suspect that the doctrines preached by the priests are not contained in the gospel; even are in many points opposed to it; that the most of the Romish ceremonies, prescriptions, observances, and articles of the creed, are mere human institutions.'

" 'Great God! what a blasphemy! Young friend, do you forget that you are bound, when it is a question of our holy religion, to believe and obey without inquiry and reflection? Do you forget that the clergy, being the lieutenants of God on earth, hold from him a

boundless authority, even the power of forgiving sins ?’

“ ‘This is what I have been taught from my infancy ; but my reason, my conscience, and my heart rebel.’ ”

“ ‘Unfortunate young man, why speak of reason, conscience, and heart ? Has not Jesus Christ established the holy Roman Catholic church ? Has he not empowered it to impose upon all Christians a creed and laws ?’ ”

“ ‘Of course, a Christian is bound to admit and practise what is recorded in the gospel ; but the most of the Romish ceremonies, observances, prescriptions, and articles of the creed, are opposed to reason, to conscience, and to the feelings of the heart.’ ”

“ ‘Error ! profanation ! impiety ! Reason, conscience, and heart are mere folly in matter of religion. To think, judge, believe, feel, and act for ourselves would be to think, judge, believe, feel, and act like unconscious men.’ ”

“ ‘But God himself has endowed me with my reason, my conscience, and my heart. I must use them ; I cannot cast them away.’ ”

“ ‘You, it is true, hold from God these faculties ; but he intends they shall be ruled by his priests, according to what he says in his gospel : “He that heareth you heareth me ; he that despiseth you despiseth me.” Young friend, you ought to understand now why your teachers forbade you the use of your reason, and restrained the propensities of your heart ; you ought to understand fully they were right, since, in spite of their efforts, they have been unable to prevent you from inquiring, reasoning, and doubting about our holy faith.’ ”

“Isram, I remained without a reply and thoughtful, for I was afraid of offending God in contradicting his minister, and not believing his word. The monk pursued : —

“‘Excuse, young friend, the boldness of my language. Ah, if I was allowed to speak for your dearest interests — to speak to you all my thoughts!’

“‘Reverend father,’ I answered, ‘speak freely; I appreciate your zeal and charity.’

“‘You believe that the word of a priest is the word of God; do you not?’

“‘I must; since I would otherwise offend God. But my reason rebels.’

“‘Listen, then, to what I am about to say. If you do not practise the ceremonies, observances, and prescriptions, and do not believe all the articles of the creed, which we priests impose upon you, God will accurse you, and his arm will chastise you. He, perhaps, will strike you with an early and sudden death; and then what will be your fate? He will perhaps permit that you spend long days on earth, but how unhappy you will be!

“‘Cain wandered, accursed, from country to country, from exile to banishment, bearing every where the divine malediction engraved on his forehead with a bronze chisel. You, accursed as he has been, — for disobedience to the priests of God is the greatest crime, — you will drag your anathema every where; it will stick to you under all skies. God will arm against you the visible and invisible beings, your fellow-creatures, and chiefly yourself, by the vain thoughts and foolish desires to which you will yield — by the regret

and remorse which will besiege you. Has not the Holy Ghost said — which every day is realized — that peace is not for a man who does not love God?

“ ‘Moreover, if I would lift one corner of the veil, which hinders our eyes from seeing the eternal justice, what mournful spectacle would strike your eyes! You would see the bottomless abyss which God has made in the days of his wrath. You would see buried and consumed in the flames the reprobate and their crimes. You would see despair, and the endless despair; for, for many centuries, the pendulum of the clock of hell moves, and the hand is still on the hour marked *Eternity*.

“ ‘Do not say that after a while you will love God. He dislikes *les rebuts*. He has said that sinners will look for him, but in vain; that they will die in their sins. Nor may you have time to repent; for he has said, “Watch, therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.”

“ ‘And, young friend, would I dare speak that to you? Your father, though young, has been struck with death. Reflect on that event, and you will apprehend why. Has not God caused the prophet Elias to die, because his son was a profaner of the temple? By your doubts on our holy faith, by your desertion of the practices of our divine church, you have become a prevaricator, and God has punished you in depriving you of your father. What! it is you who have given death to the author of your days! It is you who have plunged your family into an abyss of affliction, and your mother in despair. I stop; I cannot speak all. My words are strong, and still I do not exaggerate; I have spoken in the name of God.’

“While the minister of God was speaking, I was motionless, my eyes fixed upon the ground. Fearing to have afflicted me, he offered me his hand, and tenderly embraced me. We both, with slow steps, returned to the city; but his discourse having made me pensive and melancholy, we exchanged but few words on the way. Arriving before a church, we stopped, and he said to me, —

“‘I leave you to go and pray for you and your father. My words were austere, it is true, but all charitable. I wish they may be of service to you. If you desire a heart devoted to you, a true friend, and you wish to see me, you will find me in this temple; call for Father Francis. But I cannot leave you without desiring you to enter with me into the house of God, and offer prayers for yourself and your father.’

“The monk entered the church. I followed him, and knelt in a retired part of the chapel. A priest at the same moment mounted the steps of the holy tribune, around which a large crowd pressed. I also drew near to listen. The minister of God expounded these words of Jesus Christ: ‘For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?’ He drew in lines of fire a picture of the vengeance of Heaven, which pursues here and hereafter the infractors of the sacerdotal prescriptions. My reason rebelled at his sophistic arguments; but afraid to offend God, I repulsed this temptation, and made efforts to convince myself that God was speaking by his mouth.

“At length I was moved, and my mind struck — circumstances which caused the words spoken by the monk to sink deeper into my soul. He finished, and I

felt depressed by his discourse, in the same manner as iron is flattened by the forger's hammer. I wept much and prayed long. I thought weeping and praying would alleviate my sufferings; but it was not so. When the church was deserted, and nothing was left but the lamp burning in the sanctuary, I ceased praying, and left the temple.

CHAPTER XVI.

INTERNAL STRUGGLES OF PAUL.



ENERABLE chief, my last interview with the priest, and the discourse to which I had listened, overwhelmed me with indescribable terror, and caused me to examine myself. My disordered life was pictured to me in all its nakedness, and inspired me with horror. I immediately formed the resolution to return to my blind belief and religious practices ; but, all at once, the darkness of night en-

veloped my soul ; phantoms besieged my spirit ; and dismal thoughts haunted me. Each morning brought to me regrets more violent, remorse more bitter, and a perspective more frightful. It seemed to me that God had taken my father to punish me. Believing myself accursed, I had always before me my miserable existence, and hell with its horrid torments. I buried myself in solitude, and there, alone, sustained fierce conflicts. One voice said to me, ‘ Although your mind has rebelled, and you have been carried away by your

pride, believe the words of the monk; listen to his counsels, and the curse of God will not dwell upon you.' Another replied, 'Your sins are too great to hope for pardon; your faith is too feeble to believe the teaching of the priests. Your reason, conscience, and heart rebel at the practice of the prescriptions of the church; you can never observe them. Enjoy, then, the present, for the future is not yours.' Another, more powerful, cried, 'Seek, wait, hope; perhaps you may find a way by which you may escape from this thralldom, this bondage of the mind. Perhaps some ray of light may stream in upon your soul, and lead you from the deep darkness and sorrow in which your heart is steeped.'

"Such were the thoughts which contended with my soul. I deplored my doubts, but I could not sacrifice my reason. I wished to return, but recoiled from the difficulties to be surmounted. One morning, after a night of wakefulness and struggle, I was impelled by an invisible power towards a chapel of the Virgin, situated near the sea. There I knelt and prayed with fervor; my tears flowed abundantly. Presently I thought I saw my father writhing in his grave, and reproaching me with his death. I then imagined I heard my friends and my mother entreating me not to add to their affliction dishonor. I would then have returned to my duty, but the world, its pleasures and allurements, presented themselves to my imagination, and my resolution vanished. I struggled again — triumphed — then fell again; no assistance came from above to help me. In my despair I left the chapel, determined to follow my reason, and all the inclinations of my heart.

"I had taken a solitary path, when, suddenly, I saw a picture. The bottom was black; in the centre were sombre shadows of men, agitated and struggling convulsively. It disappeared in a whirlwind; these words remained: *The world; its passions.* They also disappeared. Then I saw flames, as of a great fire, devouring victims; they vanished, and this word I read: *Hell.* This picture also disappeared.

"A shudder passed over my body, and I fell to the earth. 'My God,' cried I, 'am I not sufficiently unhappy? Have I nothing in perspective but despair and madness?' I advanced a few steps, when another picture appeared. The bottom was white. A virgin was standing with hands extended, and from them issued something which I could not describe. Her looks were sweet, her face angelic, and in a soft voice she said to me, 'Return to the practice of religion. You shall be an apostle.' Then all vanished. My feet failed; I staggered and fell upon my face. After a few moments, I arose, endowed with supernatural strength; an indescribable peace reigned in my soul.

"I hastened to the monk, fell at his feet, confessed my sins, and received absolution. 'Now,' said he, 'God is reconciled to you; but do not think yourself secure. He alone shall be saved that perseveres to the end. The world is the dominion of the devil; he there reigns sovereign, by the concupiscence of the eyes, the intemperance of the flesh, and the pride of life. His agents are innumerable; his apostles draw almost all men near to his altars, and prostrate themselves before his idol. The small number of men who remain faithful to the practices of religion live as if they lived not:

they embrace solitude, and still can with difficulty escape the torrent of perverse doctrine and bad example.

“‘How then can you persevere? Believe me, you can only do so by being among society in body, but not in heart; by praying constantly, and remembering that according to the words of Jesus Christ, “many are called, but few are chosen.” A frightful truth! but the recollection of it will be profitable to you. You will persevere chiefly by sitting frequently at the holy table, by eating of that bread which maketh strong, and by drinking of that wine which bringeth forth fruits. In vain will the world and the devil assail you; you will always conquer; and Jesus Christ is my authority, for he said, “He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.” It was after partaking of this banquet that the first Christians became like lions; braved the seductions of the world; defied tyrants; and, by confessing their faith, placed their heads under the axe of the executioner, and, as they rolled upon the sand crimsoned with their blood, gathered a crown of martyrdom.

“‘Remember what I am about to say to you. The wicked Jezebel having sworn the death of Elias, the servant of the Lord fled to the desert; being tired, he sat under the shade of a juniper tree, and he prayed God that he might die. He cast himself down and slept; and behold, an angel of the Lord touched him, and said to him, “Arise and eat.” He looked, and behold, there was at his head an earth cake and a vessel of water; and he ate, and drank, and fell asleep again. And the angel of the Lord came again the second time,

and touched him, saying, "Arise, eat; for thou hast yet a great way to go." And he arose, and ate, and drank, and walked, in the strength of that food, forty days and forty nights, to the mount of God, Horeb.

"To you, whom sufferings oppress, and who walk in the desert of the world, I say, in the name of God, Eat and drink, for you have yet a great way to go. It is not the earth cake and a vessel of water which I offer you, but the body and blood, soul and divinity, of Jesus Christ. Frequent this sacred banquet, and you will arrive, like Elias, not to the mount of Horeb, but to the eternal mount of Paradise. I am now going to celebrate the holy sacrifice; come, then, and unite with me in thanks to God for your conversion. At my voice God will descend from heaven, and I will give him to you for food; then you will have in you the pledge of perseverance and eternal life.'

CHAPTER XVII.

UTTERANCE OF FATHER FRANCIS TO PAUL.



ACCORDING to the invitation of Father Francis, I followed him, attended mass, and took the sacrament. Since then I heard no more the voice of my reason and conscience; all my interior struggles were over; nothing remained in my memory but the sad recollection of my errors;

nor in my heart but regret for my faults, though softened by the assurance of pardon.

“Once thanking the monk for what he had done for me, I spoke of the elevated position I would take in society; the wealth I would possess; the services I would render my country; the advantageous alliance to which I could aspire; and the happiness I would enjoy in the world while working out my salvation. I saw a smile of doubt delineated on his lips. I was surprised, and inquired the cause.

“‘Yes,’ he said, ‘surely you can participate in the enjoyments of the world, and withal be saved; but I

do not think you will experience all the happiness you anticipate. What will you find there? *Riches, pleasures, honors, love, hymen, and family.*

“ ‘Can riches produce happiness? Riches is but the long and heavy cloak, which heats, encumbers, and causes the traveller to fall, when walking under a burning sky. It is as the fruits of a shrub, which grows on the ruins of Sodom; a *duvet*, soft and of dazzling whiteness, grows upon the bark, but when gathered and pressed in the hand, a black dust falls from them. Riches do not nourish the heart, for the aliment must be of the same nature as the organ to which it assimilates; material food cannot nourish the soul. Solomon, whom God endowed with great wisdom, understood it well.

“ ‘He made great works, built houses, planted vineyards, made gardens and orchards, that he set out with trees of all kinds. He had men servants and maid servants, herds of oxen and flocks of sheep; he heaped together gold and silver, and the wealth of kings and provinces. He had singing men and singing women; the wine at his table was served in cups of gold and precious stones, and he surpassed in riches all that were before him on the throne of Jerusalem; still he cried, “Vanity of vanities, all is vanity and vexation of spirit.”

“ ‘Riches not only do not satisfy the desires of the human heart, but they expose men to eternal damnation. Jesus Christ, seeing the poor weeping and the rich rejoicing, pronounced this terrible anathema: “Verily, I say unto you, that a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven.” And again, “It

is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." However, I must not exaggerate the meaning of the words of Jesus Christ, for, when the apostles, astonished at the doctrine so frightful which he uttered, exclaimed, "Who then can be saved?" he replied, "With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible."

"What else does the world offer of happiness? Pleasure? But pleasure is a stream of fire, which draws into its waves all who play on its shores; it is that fountain whose waters are delicious, but which conceals in its bosom the devouring crocodile. In the evening it gives joys; in the morning, tears. Pleasure affords but transient enjoyments. Has not Jesus Christ said to his disciples, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, You shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice; and you shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy."

"What does the world still offer of happiness? Honors? Unite your fortune to that of the great; inasmuch as you serve his ambition, he will let fall to you a few crumbs from his table, thinking that a sufficient recompense; and when he mounts another step in the ladder, you will have from him but forgetfulness and ingratitude; you will be as Joseph left in irons by the great officer of Pharaoh. Attach your arms and heart to the car of a king; surround him with fidelity and love; raise your voice to gild his name with fascinations and glory: at first, from his great height, he will smile upon you; but when covered with sweat, blood, and dust, you watch at the door of his palace,

he will renounce, perhaps assassinate you, for the holy King David himself thrust Uriah upon the sword of the Philistines to serve his brutal passions, to commit adultery.

“ ‘Sacrifice to your country your repose, your liberty, your dearest interests ; let your blood flow for her ; one day she will bear you in triumph, the next she will doom you to death. It is only necessary to examine the history of nations to prove that it is but one step from the Capitol to the Tarpeian rock. Should we be acquainted with the history of the great, we find that royalty does not afford happiness — elevated places are the abode of trouble. The largest oaks on the summit of the mountain are shattered by lightning. A golden crown covers dark sorrows, gloomy cares, and frequently imbues the head with blood, as a crown of thorns. We have seen in our own times thrones shaken by the volcano of revolutions, taking fire, being consumed, and their ashes blown by the winds into the air. We have also seen powerful kings exchanging their sceptre for a travelling staff, their robes of royalty for citizens’ dress, and wandering, in this attire, from nation to nation, from exile to banishment, and meeting at some humble inn, wherein they relate to each other the history of their misfortunes. We have seen kings, and families of kings, buried in dungeons ; deprived of the air which common men breathe ; unable to alleviate their griefs by mingling their tears ; uncovering their heads to the scaffold, there infamously assassinated ; and, after this life, going where ? God alone knows ! But this we do know ; hell is paved with the heads of the great. How many ministers on their

death beds regretted the time spent in serving masters ! How many kings, at their last moments, have wished that, in place of the sceptre, they had carried the shepherd's crook !

“ ‘What happiness does the world offer? Freedom? — but freedom is a dream. God has constituted kings and emperors rulers of the people, and the clergy ruler of all. Love? — but love is a delirium of the soul, which does not always continue, and when the illusion vanishes it leaves a grievous void in the soul. What more does it offer? Hymen? family? But hymen bows men to the earth, and diminishes their enjoyments; and Jesus Christ has said, “He that is able to receive it, let him receive it.” Did he wish virgins to marry? Loved he not the blessed John, the evangelist, who never married? ”

“ ‘Does the heart of woman offer any enjoyment? Our faculties are quickly blunted. Does not the possession of what we desire cause the illusion of happiness to vanish? Family? — but the ties of blood compress the soul, contract and circumscribe the heart. Jesus Christ has also said, “Whosoever does the will of my Father in heaven, he is my mother, my brother, and my sister.” Also, did he not reply to Mary at the marriage of Cana, “Woman, what is that to me and to thee? ”

“ ‘The apostles and the great philosophers, the illustrious conquerors and legislators, separated themselves from their families. The love of family not only paralyzes the soul, but is a source of unhappiness. Paternity is a protracted martyrdom. A father shares the lives of his children, and sympathizes in their suffer-

ings. I do not speak of the anguish of separation, because you already weep a father, and I would not renew your grief.

“ ‘The elevated position you may occupy in society ; the great riches you may possess ; the services you may render your country ; and the advantageous alliance you may contract, will not afford you the anticipated happiness. And still I have not told you of all the duties you shall fill in the world ; of all you shall suffer, in working out your salvation with fear and trembling.’

“ ‘Reverend father, how rigid is your language !’

“ ‘Notwithstanding, I have only spoken truth. Consult those on whom Fortune has bestowed her gifts, and who have grown old in the world. I do not speak only of those who are without religious principles, who walk in darkness of mind and disordered hearts, without hope of happiness beyond the tomb, but also of those who use the goods of the world with wisdom. They will tell you that happiness disappears with youth ; that the realities of life, far from rendering them happy, engender disgust, and that the pleasure derived from it is ephemeral. You ought, then, to see that the world will make you unhappy here below, and I must add, in the future life ; for Christ has accursed it.’

“ ‘Pray, reverend father, tell me what I have to do to work out in the world my eternal salvation.’

“ ‘You shall yield passively to the leading of us priests, believe and practise all we bid you to believe and practise. Besides, you shall partake with us the cares of our apostleship.’

“ ‘In what manner?’

“ ‘In facilitating our ministry; in making it more fruitful for the soul’s salvation.’

“ ‘But I do not see how I can.’

“ ‘In many ways. So, God having granted you wealth, you shall help us; holding a high social station, you shall use your influence that the great of the world protect and favor us; being vested with authority, and thereby influential on families, you shall advocate among them our power, right, and interests.’

“ ‘Is this required for my eternal salvation?’

“ ‘Certainly. Furthermore, you shall inquire from families in order that you may inform us of what is enacting among them, and reveal to us all that you know.’

“ ‘And for what purpose?’

“ ‘To enable us to rule more surely their temporal and eternal interests.’

“ ‘Is this obligatory upon me?’

“ ‘Undoubtedly; for we read in the Bible that we must watch over the conduct of our neighbors.’

“ ‘Reverend father, I must believe that what you say is the will of God, though it seems opposed to the gospel, and to my reason. Still do you allow me to speak to you all my thought, both to settle my conscience and to enable you, whom God has chosen for my guide, to know me better.’

“ ‘Yes, my son; and let me cursorily say that I feel happy to call you by this name; for you are my spiritual son, and you consider me as your father. Speak.’

“ ‘It appears to me that denunciation is a crime; for it supposes curiosity, artfulness, duplicity, false-

hood, hypocrisy, and cowardice. Far from being useful, it is injurious to all; far from generating fraternity, it generates only discord; it is the source of antipathy, contentions, quarrels, hatred, and vengeance. Moreover, though my conscience would authorize me to play the part of a spy and of a denunciator, it is against my disposition and habits to lend myself to such an office.'

" 'You are mistaken, my son. What I propose to you, far from being sinful, is laudable, and conformable to the will of God; for God looks at the heart. Intention and chiefly obedience justify before his eyes. Besides, Christ has recommended us to unite to the simplicity of the dove the prudence of the serpent. What I propose to you is not a cowardice, for your purpose would be the benefit of your neighbor. And would you feel reluctancy in accomplishing this charitable duty? With use, however, and time, your reluctancy would disappear.'

" 'Will I, at least, be permitted to go in society, and enjoy its charms?'

" 'Your eternal salvation would be very much endangered.'

" 'Yet, for my family's sake, and for my own interests, I must frequent society, yield to its exigencies, and take part in enjoyments when they are not forbidden by the gospel.'

" 'Say, rather, when they are not forbidden by the clergy, who are commissioned by God to explain the gospel. Of course you will be permitted some intercourse with society; but be aware that you must be circumspect; observe what will be enacted, and inform us about it.'

“ ‘Will I, at least, be allowed to marry?’

“ ‘Yes; but it will be a great danger for your salvation. I do not think that God calls you to marriage, for your heart would be divided, and God is sovereignly jealous. He would possess your whole heart. Moreover, you could but imperfectly, being married, participate in our ministry; and thereby you would not receive the reward promised by God to the co-workers of his priests. If, in despite of these considerations, you marry, I tremble for your eternal salvation. In celibacy, chastity is easily preserved; but in marriage it is nearly impossible. Would you know the teaching of theologians on the obligations of a married man, you would be frightened so that you would reject forever the thought of marrying.’

“ ‘Ah, reverend father, I foresee all that, practising your counsels, I must endure.’

“ ‘Do not exaggerate; you will have succor and solace. To soften the solitude which you shall have espoused in society, you can confess often, and be admitted to frequent communion. You can every day count beads — that admirable and sublime prayer which is dear to the heart of Mary, so that she descended from heaven to teach it to one of her holy servants. You likewise can, every day, during half of an hour, read mystical books; and above all, in the morning, meditate during half of an hour on some important truths of religion.’

“ ‘But in what manner shall I meditate?’

“ ‘In this: on the evening before going to rest, you shall prepare, in reading or reflecting, the matter of your meditation of the next day. During the night,

when you are awake you shall again reflect on it, and in the morning you shall keep your mind *recueilli* and attentive, lest profane ideas absorb you, and be injurious to your meditation. This is what the ascetic authors style *the indirect preparation*. Then you shall kneel, recite a vocal prayer, confess your sins to God, shall ask the help of the Holy Ghost, and recite the formulas of the acts of adoration and *remerciement*. This is *the direct preparation*. Next you shall enter upon the object of your meditation, which you shall have previously divided into three points. The greater number of acts of humility, obedience, offering, and demand, and chiefly of faith, hope, and charity, you will recite, the more your meditation will be profitable to your soul and pleasing to God.

“‘You shall take one or two resolutions, and for spiritual *bouquet* one thought, which will keep all the day in your mind the recollection of your meditation.

“‘After your meditation, you must every morning assist at the holy sacrifice of the mass. By noon you must examine your conscience, and by twilight visit in the church the holy sacrament.’

“‘But, reverend father, you entangle me in an inextricable labyrinth. My mind will be lost among all these prayers, meditations, and religious practices. Your language is to me strange; it is far from giving me any courage.’

“‘Try to practise what I say to you, and soon these practices, which seem so strange and hard, will afford to you indescribable pleasures.’

“‘Shall I be bound in conscience to all this?’

“‘I did not dare say to you all about it, fearing to

dishearten you ; but you cannot but with the greatest difficulty work out your salvation without being faithful to these practices.'

" 'Are there many Catholics who bend themselves to these restraining observances ?'

" 'Alas ! they are very few, unfortunately ; but it is not astonishing. Christ has said, "Many (are) called, but few chosen."'

" 'You say that society, wealth, dignities, pleasures, freedom, hymen, and family will endanger my eternal salvation, and that, in order to avoid the danger I shall be bound to such lonesome and hard life. O, it would be better for me to die. If, at least, I was permitted to live in the bosom of my family, and to marry, without putting my eternal salvation at stake, it would be for me some comfort.'

" 'You may not.'

" 'Have not many saints enjoyed themselves in the bosom of their families, and withal worked out their eternal salvation ?'

" 'Some of them did, but they met thorns without gathering roses.'

" 'Where then can I find happiness, for my soul thirsts for it ?'

" 'Believe me, happiness is not on earth ; but if you were grafted on Jesus Christ, life would often afford to you delicious fruits. If you were initiated in his mysterious doctrine, of which a few souls have the knowledge, it would produce in your heart a source of felicity. That doctrine would be the luminous cloud which would shield you from the sun of passion, and would guide you during the night of affliction. It would

be the manna which would nourish you in the world ; the fountain that would quench your thirst ; the water thereof was unknown to the Samaritan ; it would be the polar star which would lead you to the port of a blissful eternity.'

" ' O my father, teach me, then, this mysterious doctrine, which can give me happiness, and facilitate my salvation.'

" ' Pray ; beg God to enlighten your mind ; for this knowledge is a gift of his munificence. The rich young man spoken of in the gospel observed the law ; still he withdrew full of sadness when Jesus Christ said to him, " Sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven." Come to my monastery in eight days, in the morning. I will teach you this secret of happiness, which will afford you indescribable joy in both this and the future life.' "

CHAPTER XVIII.

PROFESSION OF A NOVICE. — SECRET OF HAPPINESS.



THE solicitation of Isram, Paul, in whom this recital aroused so many recollections, and produced such various impressions, took a few moments' repose. He then continued : —

“ The discourse of the monk, in undeceiving me, had greatly affected me. However, I had one consolation ; it was his promise of initiating me in the true secret of a present and future felicity.

“ On the day which he had appointed, I went to the monastery, and the monk said to me, —

“ ‘ The ceremony of the profession of a novice is about to take place in the church ; perhaps it may interest, perhaps affect you. I invite you to attend ; then we can entertain ourselves at our leisure.’

“ I acquiesced ; he led me into the church, and afterwards took his place in the choir with the other

monks. After praying a few moments, I looked around, and was dazzled by the magnificence. The interior of the building was immense; it formed a vaulted nave, with many arches. Ranges of richly-carved columns supported the beautifully-fluted arches. Pictures in fresco, glittering with gold, ornamented the vaults. The mouldings of these pictures were strong and fine. The window frames were luxuriantly carved; on the glass were painted, in rich colors, scenes from the Old and New Testament, through which the sun seemed to shed a veiled and mysterious light. Along the sides of the nave were raised altars of white marble, surmounted by images of the saints to whom they were dedicated. All around the church small columns were intertwined with garlands, and their richly-carved capitals supported finely-moulded wainscots. Under the side arches were galleries with graceful balustrades, extending the whole circumference of the church. At the commencement of the gallery above the portal, the organ case was supported by Caryatides, around which were graceful branches of evergreens and *bouquets* of flowers, displaying the whiteness of the marble between the leaves. Costly pictures, symmetrically arranged, ornamented the walls. A gilded railing separated the nave from the choir, where were a number of richly-carved seats.

“ At the bottom of the sanctuary, forming a rotunda, were costly marbles, ornamented by beautiful carving of garlands of roses — work of the great artists; and statues, wrought by the chisel of the most distinguished sculptors. High columns were spherically arranged around the great altars, on which the richest

gilding and carving were seen. The chandeliers were of gold, and the lustres were dazzling with a thousand prismatic colors. The most of the sacerdotal garments were of golden cloth and rich embroidery. The sacred vessels were of massive gold, and interspersed with diamonds and precious stones. Whatever was used in the highest sacerdotal functions was of gold, silver, or costly materials. As to those things that in worship are destined for less noble purposes, they were equally expensive; even the carpets were rich and silky. When my eyes became familiar with this pomp and magnificence, the ceremony fixed my attention.

“At the right side of the vault, a throne was erected, upon which the superior of the convent had taken his place, on a seat covered with velvet and adorned with splendid drapery. A deacon, subdeacon, and other subordinate officers occupied seats upon the degrees of the throne. In the centre of the choir, the floor was covered with a black cloth; a coffin, covered with a pall, was placed upon it; four white wax candles were burning around it; and at the foot grinned a death's head, placed on two bones, in the form of a cross. On an elevated estrade, ladies displayed with pride their rich and costly attire; and, in a semicircle was a confused crowd of spectators, whom curiosity had attracted. Below, at the side of the throne, was seated a youth, arrayed in the most pompous style. It was the novice, who was about to make his profession.

“After the reading of the Gospel, the priest mounted the pulpit, and addressed the assembly. He compared

the world to the gloomy images which shadowed the sanctuary, and the magnificence and pomp of the ceremony to the sweets and charms of a religious life. He concluded by saying the world was the abode of spiritual blindness, affliction of heart, and death of the soul; and the cloister that of true light and felicity.

"After this discourse, the novice approached, and knelt at the feet of the superior, who propounded the following questions to him:—

" 'What brings you thus adorned into the house of God?'

" 'The salvation of my soul.'

" 'Do you renounce the pomp and vanity of the world?'

" 'I do renounce them.'

" 'Do you vow to live a life of chastity?'

" 'I do.'

" 'Do you renounce your own will, and vow to obey the will of your superiors?'

" 'I do renounce my own will, and vow to obey my superiors.'

" 'Go, then,' said he to him, 'cast off and trample under foot the livery of the world; then come and take your place in this coffin under the funeral pall. This death will separate you from the world; but this tomb will be to you the cradle of a new life. You, like the chrysalis, will leave your terrestrial covering, and come out anew with rich wings, which will elevate you to the region of virtue and happiness.'

"The superior ceased speaking, and the organ pealed forth its sublime chant.

"The novice was conducted to the sacristy, where his

unholy dress was taken off, and he was clothed in a religious habit. He then returned to the choir, and was laid in the coffin : he was covered with a pall, and then the office for the dead was recited. After this ceremony, he drew near the superior, and received his benediction, embraced each of the monks, and took his place among them. The offering of the holy sacrifice was then continued ; and when it was finished, he prostrated himself before the statue of the Virgin, which was arrayed in silk and velvet, and glittered with more diamonds and precious stones than the queens of the earth. There he consecrated himself, and implored her special protection. Then the *Te Deum* was chanted in thanksgiving that one soul was snatched from the world, and consecrated to God.

“The crowd quietly dispersed, but I was greatly moved. The monk called me to him, and led me to the interior of the convent. We traversed a vast court and immense rooms, where marble statues and decorations were distributed in great profusion. We passed through long corridors and immense galleries surrounding the monastery, ornamented with all the magic of art. We entered the vestibule, where arose a spiral staircase, with steps and balustrade of marble. From there we passed into the gardens, where the monks were already assembled, to enjoy themselves until the hour of the entertainment ; for this was a *fête* day — another was added to their family.

“Father Francis left me to my contemplations, without making any remark. We then wandered by the borders of beautiful fountains, with magnificent reservoirs, and traversed several gardens of varied and

elegant designs. We penetrated a wooded labyrinth, and pursued its many windings till we entered a shaded spot called by Father Francis *Golgotha*. It was a *tertre*, shaped as an English garden : on the top thereof a cross, loaded with gilt hearts, was erected. At a little distance below it were groups of *yeuses*, with a polished bark, and a beautiful foliage. The same hand had planted them ; the same spring had seen their buds opening and blooming ; they had been agitated by the same winds. Their branches that blended, and were close to each other, fell again in the middle, and formed a cradle. Vines of *smilax*, that twined around their trunks flexible rings, arose in the form of spirals to the ends of their branches, and descended again like garlands, on which they enlaced with their folds.

“ ‘ Let us stop,’ the monk said, ‘ and enter into this grove.’ ”

“ We entered in, and sat on a root arched over the ground.

“ ‘ Reverend father,’ I asked, ‘ am I allowed to entreat you to initiate me in the mysterious doctrine of the gospel, that can, you have said to me, make me happy here below and hereafter ? ’ ”

“ ‘ Listen then, young friend, to what I am about to speak to you, and ponder it : — ”

“ ‘ “ Then answered Peter, and said unto him, [Jesus Christ,] Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee : what shall we have therefore ? And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of

Israel. And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive a hundred fold, and shall inherit everlasting life."

" 'This is the hidden meaning of these words: —

" 'We have to leave society, because it is hostile both to the gospel and those that practise it.

" 'We have to espouse the religious life, because it is a public profession of the Christian perfection, and an evident mark of predestination.

" 'We have to despise honors, to be modest and humble, because those that are the first in this world shall be the last in the house of God. Jesus Christ fled to the wilderness when the people intended to crown him king.

" 'We have to leave our inheritance, because "a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of God." Voluntary poverty is an easy way, leading to heaven.

" 'We have to leave the land of our nativity, because we have not on earth a permanent dwelling. The heavens are our sole and true country.

" 'We have to deny our family according to the flesh, and not to live in its bosom, because we belong to God, and not to our parents; because, if he calls us by an extraordinary grace, we ought to "let the dead bury their dead;" because the parents of man are his enemies. We ministers of Jesus Christ do not preach such a sublime doctrine before the common people, for the Savior has said to his apostles, "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you." "

“ ‘Reverend father, explain to me this doctrine ; it seems to me a monstrous one.’

“ ‘What a blasphemy ! but I excuse your ignorance. If I initiate you in this holy and mysterious doctrine, it is only because God has revealed to me, whilst I was praying for you, that he calls you to religion.’

“ ‘I still, reverend father, feel against the monachal life the strongest reluctance.’

“ ‘It is a temptation from the devil. God permits it to try and purify your soul, so that you be worthy of your divine calling. But I have not time at present to talk about it. Listen to me. You say that my interpretation of the words of Christ is monstrous. As proof that it is their true meaning, we monks, who practise it, receive the hundred fold promised by Christ.’

“ ‘What is this hundred fold?’

“ ‘This is it : —

“ ‘We monks have renounced honors ; but we are allowed by Christ to say to the people, “ Build up for us churches ; let them be splendid, for we are the lieutenants of God on earth. You shall divide them into two parts ; the one for us, the other for you. Ours shall be called *sanctuary*, yours *nave*. You shall raise up a gilded railing separating them ; you shall call it *the sacred table of communion*. You shall pave our sanctuary with marble ; you shall adorn it with luxuriant *menuiseries* ; with pictures, sculptures, and statues ; with purple seats, soft carpets, and dazzling lustres. In the centre you shall erect an altar of the richest stone ; and before we mount its steps, you shall buy for us and shall dress us with sacerdotal ornaments,

shining with silk, embroideries, silver, gold, and precious stones. Thereon we will summon God to leave heaven, to be present in our hands, and to obey, passively, our will. You shall put up a throne by the altar. We will sit thereon, crowned with a mitre, and holding a sceptre. The great of the world only, and the handsomest boys, will be permitted to surround the throne, and to kiss, on their knees, our feet or hands. Whenever we do rise up, you shall kneel and prostrate yourselves on the floor of the nave. Then we will extend our arms, and bless you. You shall erect a tribune ; the steps thereof we will mount to teach you ; you shall call it *the sacred desk*, because therefrom we will impose upon you our interpretation of the gospel. You shall make confessionals, wherein, kneeling before us, you shall reveal to us your thoughts and feelings, and shall confess all you have done opposed to our will, that thereby are sins before God. Then we will extend our hand over your head, will pronounce, if it is our good will, mysterious words, and your sins will be forgiven ; your soul will become as clean, as white, as snow, and from sinners and accursed of God that you were, you will be just, and favorites of God."

" ' And the people build for us splendid churches ; divide them into two parts ; the one for us, the other for themselves. They call ours *sanctuary*, and theirs *nave*. They raise up a gilded railing separating them, and call it the *sacred table of communion*. They pave our sanctuary with marble ; adorn it with luxuriant *menuiseries*, with pictures, sculptures, and statues ; with purple seats, soft carpets, and dazzling lustres. They erect in the centre an altar of the richest stone ; buy

for us and dress us with sacerdotal ornaments, shining with silk, embroideries, silver, gold, and precious stones. They put up a throne by the altar, and we sit therein crowned with a mitre, and holding a sceptre. The great of the world and the handsomest boys solicit the favor of standing around our throne, of kissing, on their knees, our feet and hands. The people, when we rise up, kneel and prostrate themselves on the floor of the nave to receive our benediction. The people erect a tribune; the steps thereof we mount to teach them; they call it *the sacred desk*. They make confessionals wherein they reveal to us their thoughts and feelings, confess, and are absolved of their sins.

“‘Is this not, young friend, the hundred fold of the honor that we have renounced? But this is not all. Out of our sanctuary we are like Moses coming down from Mount Sinai, with the two tables of testimony in his hands; the people believe that our faces shine with a divine light. They are respectful and afraid to come nigh us. All of them bow to us in the streets and public squares. The great of the world deem themselves highly honored when we appear in their parlors, or sit at their tables. We drink out of the cup of kings, and overrule their courts, their armies, and their people. We compel them to come and kneel before us to ask us what they must think, feel, and do; to confess, and receive from our good will the absolution of their sins.

“‘Was I not right saying that we monks receive in religion the hundred fold of the honors that we have renounced?

“‘We monks have renounced wealth. But we are

as rich as kings. The farmers sow and harvest for us. The vinedressers raise for us the most delicate grapes, and press the most generous wines. The sailors cross the seas, and bring to us, from foreign lands, the richest gifts. The merchants present us with their best goods. The mechanics lavish upon us their labor, and the artists their talent. All classes of society work to enrich us, because they understand well that we, being potent and influential, can be of great service to them. And behold, count, if you can, the splendid convents and country houses which the people have put up for us; all the rich and immense property that they have bought for us all over the world. Besides, count, if you can, the amount of money which we have in our cellars, in our chests, in the banks, and every where. Moreover, do you not see with your own eyes that the magnificence of this convent is *féérique*?

“I ask you now, young friend, if we monks do not receive and enjoy in religion the hundred fold of the wealth that we have renounced.

“We have renounced pleasures. But what are they in society? Bitterness, and nothing else. In religion we enjoy them without disturbance. We are rid of the care of a family. We enjoy wealth without fearing to lose it; we gather roses without being pricked by their thorns. Moreover, can you conceive a greater or nobler pleasure than to shine on the chandelier; to rank above society; to be mediator between God and man; than to rule men as Providence rules the universe?

“Is this not the hundred fold of the pleasures that we have renounced?

“ ‘We have renounced our family according to the flesh ; but we have adopted a family according to God. Our carnal parents loved us with a material and sensual love ; but in religion our superiors love us more tenderly. We had but one father and one mother, a few brothers and sisters ; but in religion it is not so ; if we travel all over the globe, we find in all kingdoms, empires, and republics, even in all savage tribes, ecclesiastical superiors who love us more than our fathers and mothers did ; we find brothers who, instead of being selfish, carnal, and our enemies, as our brothers and sisters would have been, entertain for us a true fraternal affection.

“ ‘Is it not the hundred fold of the enjoyments that the family which we have renounced would have afforded to us ?

“ ‘We have renounced hymen ; but the eternal beauty offers us its charms ; the source of the infinite loveliness fills our heart. We plunge into the ocean of the divine perfectness, and lose ourselves in its deep. Intoxicated with love, our soul masters our flesh, leaves our body, takes her flight to the celestial regions, and unites to her divine husband. She exclaims in her delirium, in her burning kisses, “Plenty of joy, Lord ! plenty of voluptuousness, my divine Spouse ! O, enlarge my heart, for it is overflowing.”

“ ‘I ask you now, young friend, if in the religious life we have not the hundred fold of the enjoyments that honors, wealth, pleasure, family, and hymen would have afforded to us had we not renounced them ?’

“ ‘Reverend father, I beg leave to say, that if I was

not aware that, being a lieutenant of God on earth, all that you say in his name is right, I should be scandalized at what you say on the hundred fold of honors, wealth, pleasures, family, and hymen, that the monks enjoy in religion : it is anti-Christian.'

" 'Stop, young friend ; you are about to blaspheme. Alas ! I must excuse your ignorance of the science of the gospel. You do not apprehend the holiness and sublimity of the doctrine which we monks, and the whole Romish church, hold on the words of the gospel, that I have related to you. And why do you not apprehend them ? Because your sins obnubilate your soul, and render it unable to receive so precious a seed.'

" 'O reverend father, how much I have to mourn over my past life, over my numberless iniquities ! Would that I had been virtuous, that I might have apprehended the doctrine which, you say, would make me happy here below and hereafter.'

" 'Young friend, cheer up ; God is merciful. I, like you, have lived in the world. I, like you, belonged to a rich family. I, like you, saw a brilliant career unrolling itself before my eyes. I have, perhaps, more than you to mourn over a stormy youth.'

" 'O my father, what do you mean ?'

" 'What I say is, unfortunately for me, too true. I was sent by my family to Naples for the purpose of studying law. I was then twenty years of age. At first I remained virtuous ; but soon after I forgot, as you did, many religious practices, and withal lost my relish for study. The glitter of the world deceived me ; its exterior fascinations excited in my soul a thirst

for enjoyment, and kindled in my heart the desire to participate therein. But a barrier was raised before me, which I thought insurmountable. I was enchained, and believed the rigors of religion had riveted my fetters. A sweet voice invited me to mirth; but I trembled at the menaces of an angry God. An enchanted path was before me; but at its termination I saw threatening eternal precipices. I desired to gather flowers in the spring time of life, and crown myself with roses; but they were to leave in my hands a deadly poison. I desired to sacrifice myself to my youth, but I could not at the same time devote myself to virtue. I wished, and I did not wish. I vowed my heart to the practice of austere devotion; but, surprised, I found myself floating with delight on the river of voluptuousness. "I will disembark," said I; but immediately the shore faded from my sight. I was vanquished.

"Then I offered my incense to liberty and the god of pleasure. Excitement was necessary to me, and I found it every day; dress, promenades, entertainments, play, festivities, balls, theatres in their turn paid tribute to me. All the powers of my being, virgin and vigorous, drank of these delights to intoxication, and never found bitterness at the bottom of the cup. I took with pleasure, and left without regret. I flew from flower to flower, but never exhausted the cup. I reaped with full sickle in the field of happiness. Alas! once on the precipice, I fell to the bottom of the gulf. I still felt the influence of virtue, the thought of glory, filial tenderness, and religion; but I soon trampled upon them. I asked myself, "What is the weight of glory in the scale

of pleasure? What does it signify to my family that I become the slave of study or pleasure, if they are ignorant of my conduct? What have I to fear from religion? I have a long future in which to return to her."

"I yielded to the weakness of my senses, and followed the most inordinate desires of my heart. However, I was soon disgusted; my sensibilities were blunted, my spirits dull, my heart withered, and my whole being enfeebled and wasted. My remorse was so great, and produced in me a void so profound, that I longed for death.

"Young friend, I have, as you see now, to mourn more than you over a stormy youth. Notwithstanding, mark, God in his mercy opened my eyes, and called me to him. He permitted me to see all the sublimity of the religious life, all the happiness which it affords in leading surely to the eternal felicity of paradise. I entered then into religion; and from that time till this day I have tasted celestial joys that were unknown to my soul while living in the world.'

"Reverend father, how happy you are to have been drawn out of the abyss of iniquity, to have been forgiven by God, and called by him to the religious life!'

"I still had not more evident proofs of my divine calling than you have now. Had I not yielded to the will of God, declared to me by his ministers, I should have, instead of working out my salvation in the world, assured my endless reprobation. I have, then, to say to you that you must make my example profitable to you; that you ought to keep well in your mind that

you are certainly called by God to the religious life; that if you harden longer your ears to his voice, and your heart to his grace, and do not enter into religion, your eternal salvation will be at stake. And what say I? To speak more exactly and truly, you cannot escape the eternal reprobation, and work out your eternal salvation, except by incessant miracles; but to trust in miracles from God is sinful, for it is to tempt him.'

" 'But, reverend father, as I have already said to you, I feel against the religious life the utmost reluctance.'

" 'It is an artifice of the spirit of darkness, that is aware of your divine calling, and uses all means to hinder your soul from seeing light.'

" 'Then, reverend father, you believe that God calls me to religion.'

" 'I not only believe it, but I know it from himself: and do not attenuate my words; ponder well their tenor. I declare to you, in God's name, that you have to enter into religion, and this, for you, as an almost absolute condition of eternal salvation.'

" 'Since I must, I will enter into religion. But how unhappy I shall be! The hundred fold you spoke of is for me without charms. Life in a convent, though comfortable, seems to me sad and dark. Your secret of happiness will make me unhappy.'

" 'You are mistaken. As soon as you enter the convent, you will taste the joys of which I have spoken.'

" 'And my mother?'

“ ‘What have you more to do with your mother, when God calls you? Did not Christ say to his, “Woman, what have I to do with thee?” The doors of the convent are open to you; come to look for, in this ark, a refuge against the deluge of iniquities which overflows the world.’ ”

CHAPTER XIX.

PAUL FALLS IN LOVE.



ENERABLE chief, here I recall painful recollections. The mysterious day arose on which I was to date the sacrifice of myself to God, but from which are dated horrible sufferings, that cause me to relapse into my former state. Then I had never loved.

“It was the morning of a great festival. I thoughtfully made my preparations, took the road to the monastery, and on my way passed before a church. At that moment the ring-

ing of bells summoned the faithful to the house of God. A ceremony was about to commence. Curiosity arrested my steps, and I contemplated a great crowd, hurriedly collecting. The touching simplicity of the common people, and the religious and thoughtful air of some pious ladies, charmed me. I was insensible to the grace and beauty of the young Neapolitans, and saw with contempt the splendor of the equipages, the elegance and beauty of the toilets.

“ Suddenly a young girl appeared near me. At the sight of her I was immovable ; my heart beat with sweet and indescribable emotions. She penetrated the crowd, and disappeared. I felt she had already robbed my soul of its peace and liberty. In passing, the beautiful unknown had invested me with the livery of slavery — the golden chain of love. I followed, and sought her in the church, and knelt near her. At that moment the organ began to breathe, and fill with its deep and melodious tones the immense church. Seraphic voices in charming harmony sang a hymn of praise to the Eternal. Levites in white tunics slowly advanced into the sanctuary, bearing in their hands symbolic lights and numerous censers ; others with golden insignia, followed by white-haired priests, who came to assist at the sacrifice. After these came the pontiff, who was to officiate at the holy sacrifice, robed in cloth of gold. One hand rested on the crosier, glittering with precious stones ; and with the other, on which shone a ring set with diamonds, he gave his blessing to the congregation. Arriving at the foot of the altar, he mounted the steps, and was enveloped in clouds of incense, curling up towards heaven. Then he asked of the Almighty the fire which purified the lips of Isaiah ; bowed under the weight of the sins and transgressions of the people ; struck his breast thrice, to represent to God the general contrition ; then offered the sacrifice.

“ The crowd silently passed out, but I had not offered one of my thoughts to God. I was prostrate ; yet I had not addressed him one prayer. I had adored, but it was a strange divinity. She alone had fixed my

gaze ; to her alone had I prayed in my inmost heart ; to her alone had I offered sacrifice. My offering was agreeable to her, for I obtained a look, a smile ; and afterwards she wrote me these words, so much desired by my heart, and so delightful to my soul, "*I love you.*"

"I went no more to the monastery. I forgot the monk, my family, God, and myself. I even forgot my own existence. At the thought of her I loved, I became intoxicated by a delicious delirium. I bore with me in my solitude her image, her voice, her eyes, her smiles, her tears, her charms. I felt nothing in my heart but her and her love. I said to myself, 'How proud you would be to possess her ! How happy to be united to her ! What else could you wish for ? Earth would be a paradise ! Would you have any thing to envy in the bliss of heaven ?' Alas ! my intoxication was of short duration. An unknown, whom, notwithstanding my researches, I have never been able to see again, gave me secretly a small box, and then withdrew before I could speak to him. I hastily opened it. What was my surprise, when I discovered it contained a golden heart and a lock of hair !"

When Paul uttered these words, Julia grew pale ; the expression of her eyes changed, and she fixed a penetrating look upon him. He perceived it, and was surprised, but continued : —

"At first my happiness was extreme ; but one painful thought soon forced itself upon my mind, and dissipated my illusion. 'She has quitted Naples,' I said ; 'and, leaving, has sent me this remembrance. She was to me only a shooting star, or a meteor bright-

ening the heavens.' I sought her for a long time, and at length became exhausted by my fruitless efforts. I did not see her again, nor could I ascertain where she had fixed her abode.

"Since then, God alone has been the witness of my anguish and suffering. I thought no more of my own existence; I suffered without feeling my pain. To dissipate my melancholy, I went to *soirées*; but they were irksome to me. I threw myself into the vortex of past pleasures; but I found only bitterness. The theatre, for a time, seemed to charm and lull my grief; but leaving it, I found myself in a frightful gulf; it only aggravated the disease which was destroying me; like oil, it revived the flame which was consuming me. I fled the tumultuous city; retired into solitude; but there also I bore my chains; and when I endeavored to cast them off, they fell more heavily upon my heart.

CHAPTER XX.

PAUL'S DREAMS OF LOVE.



NE evening, sad and mus-
ing, I strolled along the
quay. It was near the
close of day; the lights
burned brightly. Vesuvi-
us flooded the bay, some-
times with a reddish, then
a sombre, and then a bril-
liant light. Fishing boats
in full sail were enter-
ing the port, and several
ships, with their furled
sails, slowly gliding among
the lines. The sailors had
deserted the sailyards;
they no longer made the

capstan creak, relieving themselves by their monoto-
nous songs, nor with the united efforts of their strong
arms lifted heavy burdens on the deck. With their
numerous oars they hastened to the shore, and joyful
with the thought of the evening's pleasure, sang in an
harmonious choir some lovely couplets of an Italian
song. It was the hour of cessation from labor; all
became still.

"I then cast my eyes upon the sea; the surface
thereof was slightly ruffled by the breeze. Thoughts as

strange as irresistible beset my mind. How happy I should be, I said, to find her again. We would fly on these billows. Immensity would open its arms to us. We should be secure from the tyranny of mortals. We would soon land at some hospitable shore; or, if Heaven should be unpropitious, the same bosom would shroud our loves. If one of the cities of Europe would give us an asylum, my mother would pity our sufferings, and make our days flow happily. Should we be conveyed to some solitary shore, that spot would be our universe. My own hands would procure the daily food for her I love. My life should be spent in charming her solitude; and when years would have emptied the cup of our love, the same tomb would receive us.

“So great was my delirium, that this imaginary idea for a moment consoled my grief. I returned home, flattering myself with this vain thought, that one day my dream would be realized.

“On my arrival, I received a letter from my mother, advising me to leave Naples, and return to her.

CHAPTER XXI.

PAUL IN ATHENS.



IMMEDIATELY left Naples, and after a short voyage arrived at Athens. I found my mother still inconsolable for the death of my father, and my whole family in deep affliction. On beholding me, my mother burst into tears; deep sobs choked her utterance; she threw herself into my arms, and for some time gave vent to her grief.

“This heart-rending scene, the mourning apparel, the loneliness of the domestic hearth, the sight of the tomb of my father, where I daily went to pray, and above all the despair of never seeing the girl I loved, plunged me into a deep melancholy. My mother strove for a long time, but in vain, to console and divert me.

“One day she accompanied me to the house of one of my father’s friends. We found his daughter playing upon the harp; the chords trembled harmoniously under her touch. She sang these words of the prophet: ‘By the rivers of Babylon there we sat down, yea, and we

wept when we remembered Zion. We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof. For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song; and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion. How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?'

"Her voice was angelic; her fingers made the sentiments expressed in this sacred poetry flow like waves upon the chords. Her azure eyes were raised to heaven, her mouth and all her countenance reflected the inspiration of her soul. The tears that flowed down her cheeks betrayed the feelings of her heart; the words falling from her lips seemed symbolical; every thing about her indicated some mysterious sentiment, the ardor of all that was burning and concealed in a solitary love. She had felt as I had felt, she had suffered as I had done. There was such an identity between her soul and mine; I was so frantically happy in my grief, that, seeing her, I thought I beheld my best beloved, not suspecting that I was deluded. After that I visited her frequently. Near her I was raptured; I was supremely happy. But soon my eyes undeceived me; she no longer resembled my loved one. In vain I saw her ravishing beauty, her admirable spirit, and her glowing heart; I no longer loved her. I relapsed into sadness and melancholy. My mother — who, wishing by this union to have me established near her, had encouraged this love — expressed to me her displeasure. I then told her that, during my sojourn in Naples, another woman had won my heart. In vain she pictured to me the riches, the honors, the felicity this union would give me. I implored her to allow me

to return to Naples, seek the one I loved, unite myself to her, and return to be her support and consolation. She opposed me for some time ; but finding me resolute, she finally consented

CHAPTER XXII.

PAUL COMES AGAIN TO NAPLES. — HE MEETS WITH
FATHER FRANCIS.



VENERABLE chief, during several months I wandered through the streets, frequented the public squares, the churches, and theatres of Naples. I sought every where, but never met the woman I loved. I then lost all hope.

“One day Father Francis came to me.

“‘At length,’ he said, ‘I meet you, and can rejoice. My son was dead, and he is come again to life. I had lost you, and to-day I have found you. Explain to me

why you do not come to the convent, and why you have not visited me for so long.’

“I cast down my eyes, blushed, and remained without an answer. I then recollected all that he had done for the salvation of my soul, particularly my resolution of entering into religion, which he had imposed upon me as a sacred obligation, and I still had forgot. I related to him my encounter with a girl when I was

going to the monastery; the passion, which she had kindled in me; my departure, and my sojourn in Athens; the circumstances of my coming back to Naples; the disappearance of the girl whom I loved; my searches to find her, and my despair in foreseeing that my love would never be crowned.

“Whilst I related these circumstances, I saw his face turning alternately pale, fiery, expressing stupefaction, indignation, and sorrow. When I ceased to speak, he did not utter a single word, but remained silent and thoughtful. After a moment, he addressed me with animation: —

“O God! how monstrous your prevarications have been! What! You have loved a woman, and still love her? An impure flame consumes your heart? A woman, that personified devil, has expelled God from your soul, and you have therein erected to her a throne whereupon she reigns? I explain to myself the sins of the flesh, the brutal passion; for the doctors of the church and the theologians admit attenuating circumstances. Jesus Christ himself has said, “The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.” But the love of woman! Heaven! what disorganization! what depravation of the whole man! It is written, “The Lord thy God is a jealous God among you.” St. Paul says, “By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin.” And who induced Adam to sin? Eve. Has not Bathsheba seduced the holy King David? Has not woman betrayed Samson, put him in the hands of his enemies, and caused his death? Is not woman compared to a serpent by all the mystical authors? “Her eyes are charming,” they write,

"but they give death." Has St. Paul spoken of love, when he taught the faithful on marriage? No. He used only the word *charity*.

" ' Judge by your own experience to what an extent woman can waste a heart. By the precious gift of absolution, you were in peace with your conscience ; and now you are much more culpable than you had ever been. God by my voice called you to the religious life, and you have not listened to him ; you went so far in your rebellion against him as to lose even the recollection of your holy resolutions.' •

" ' But, my father, how great is my astonishment ! I did not suspect I had sinned. I thought that the love of man for woman is a law of the Creator. I loved a woman merely because I saw in her some image or emanation of the loveliness of God.'

" ' Love is the most infamous of the prostitutions, for our body is merely matter and flesh ; but the heart is a spirit, and an image of the Deity. Love is one of the greatest among the greatest crimes : and if you do not renounce the love of the creature to love exclusively the Creator ; if you do not accompany me, confess your sins, repent them, and obtain their pardon by absolution ; if you do not make penance, and do not listen to the voice of God addressed to you by my mouth, and espouse the religious life, I cannot but tremble for your future.'

" ' My father, undoubtedly I have sinned, for you say so ; but in spite of my will I cannot believe it. My reason and my heart teach me too clearly that love is not sinful. St. Paul himself has said, "Husbands, love your wives."'

“Well; but he has added, “Even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it.” But it is not a question of reason, of heart, even of the gospel, for are not we priests commissioned by God to explain it?’

“Islam, the utterance of Father Francis impressed me so deeply, that in a moment I felt I was another man. I accompanied him, confessed my sins, received absolution, and buried myself in solitude to pray and meditate. After that, and in lieu of my great agitation, a holy calm filled my soul. Though love was powerful in my heart, I hearkened to the voice of religion; and I felt that God had resumed his reign in my heart. I then thought again of the Christian duties I had abandoned, and of my design to enter a religious life. I felt that I had been the sport of my imagination and the victim of my heart; that I had not been faithful to the grace of God; that the love of the creature had estranged me from the love of the Creator; and that I had not suffered sufficiently because of this. Where God is not the first in our hearts, there is disorganization; and where this is, there is no peace—nothing but suffering.

“One day, crossing a public square, I saw at a short distance a lady whom I believed to be the girl I thought I had ceased to love. I ran to assure myself, but she was lost in the crowd; I saw her no more.

“This incident produced a frightful tempest in my soul. A frantic start of joy agitated my frame; the joy of my heart was intoxication, or rather madness. It seemed to me that I should certainly meet her again; that she would preserve her heart for me; and

that, in sending me a *souvenir*, she showed she did not wish to bid me an eternal adieu."

When Paul pronounced these last words, tears moistened the eyelids of Julia. He remarked it, stopped an instant, and in an agitated voice continued, —

"Recollections then besieged my memory; the number and impetuosity of my thoughts transported my mind; I even neglected to struggle, but gave free vent to my imagination. This was my misfortune.

"The discourses of the monk, which before had appeared to me so wise and so true, now seemed but a tissue of exaggerations and errors. The circumstances of my conversion to God, which I had regarded as astonishing, were now but dreams and illusions. The world seemed the abode of happiness. Affection, family, the tenderness of my mother's love, and hymen presented charms to me before unknown. The present filled the measure of my desires, and the future realized my hopes. The cloister, on the contrary, appeared sad and terrible as the grave: the sombre dress, the silence, the fasts, the haircloth, the discipline inspired me with aversion and horror.

"‘After all,’ thought I, ‘in the world salvation is possible, and I will reap its happiness.’ Still this sudden change alarmed me. I went to my director; told him of the occurrence which had taken place; related to him my trouble, the greatness of my joy, the delirium of happiness which had given me hope, the reflections I had made upon his discourses, and my aversion to a religious life.

"He listened to me kindly, and spoke to me thus: —

"‘The oak grows only in the region of storms. Gold

is purified only in the crucible. Man becomes strong and vigorous only by passing through the fire of adversity. The sailor becomes mariner only in the tempest. Soldiers become warriors only on the field of battle. You, who wish to grow to the height of virtue, ought to be convinced that you will only take root by being exposed to the winds of adversity. You are called by God to be a wall of brass before opposition, to sustain the battles of the Lord, and to pilot your brothers on the ocean of the world. It is, then, necessary to prove yourself a warrior, and be instructed in the school of temptation. It is the road pointed out by Jesus Christ to his disciples. He conquered, and through him you will conquer; but for that watch and pray. The angel of darkness transforms himself before you into an angel of light, and you are deceived by this fallacious light. He spread under your feet nets full of craftiness and perfidy, which have caused not only neophytes, but heroes of virtue, to fall. The greatest saints feared, and fled into solitude to avoid them. Still in the depths of their retreat they heard the voice of the sirens, and felt its influence.

“ ‘St. Jerome retired into a corner of Palestine: there he subdued his body, and suppressed his sensibility; still, when he saw the Roman ladies, the sight of them touched his heart, and shook his judgment.

“ ‘St. Augustine withdrew into a silent retreat in Africa, lived retired from the world and its seductions, but still he dreamed of the woman he loved.

“ ‘St. Mary of Egypt, though buried in a desert beyond the Jordan, could not drown by her tears of repentance the charming recollections of her former loves.

“ ‘How many apostles, martyrs, and confessors, had, by means of mortification and labor, to repulse these seductive images !

“ ‘Your perils are imminent ; of this you can judge by the troubles which these assaults have produced in your mind and heart. Thanks be given to divine mercy, you have come to his minister to be enlightened and fortified ; but experience will teach you that you will have new attacks to sustain. Struggle, then, against them, and come to the priest whom God has commissioned to guard your soul. Listen to and follow his counsel ; your obedience will be your pledge of victory, for it is written, “ He that heareth you heareth me ; he that despiseth you despiseth me.” The obedient man gains the victory. Since God calls you to a religious life, harden not your heart, but be attentive to my voice. Cast aside human considerations ; strive against the remembrance of love, which is destroying the peace of your soul, and may endanger your salvation. Walk with firmness and constancy in the path of virtue, and when I deem your heart is sufficiently disengaged from the things of the world, the doors of the monastery will be open to you. As soon as they shall be closed upon you, the world will be to you as if it existed not ; you will forget the remembrance of it. This place of refuge will be to you a heaven, where nothing will trouble the repose and serenity of your soul.’

“ ‘Father,’ said I, ‘if, after having entered into a religious life, I have always before my eyes the woman whom I loved, my mother, my family, and society, in the bosom of which I could have been saved, what

will be my despair! My regrets will be without remedy.'

" 'Fear not. God will permit these things to advance you in perfection. The devil will disturb the peace of your soul with dangerous recollections; but by prayer you will conquer. It is said, "Ask and it shall be given you." Prayer penetrates the heavens. If you have faith as a grain of mustard seed, you can remove mountains. Moreover, cast your eyes around you, and see that he extends the mantle of his providence to every being who raises to him the prayer of humility. If he lets the plant be parched by the heat of the summer sun, he sends the dews to refresh its stems and beautify its petals with the richest colors. If he leaves the onager to wander thirsty in the desert, instinct teaches him to scrape the sands, and to cause fountains to spring up to quench his thirst.'

" 'But my family?'

" 'The parents of man are his enemies; the most pious saints have renounced them.'

" 'My mother will die of sorrow.'

" 'Do you know not that Christ said to one of his apostles, "Let the dead bury their dead"?'

" 'She will come to compel me to leave the monastery.'

" 'It shall not be in her power. Moreover, know and keep well in your mind that the Cardinal Bellarmine and the most celebrated Catholic divines of our holy church teach that a son may, and consequently must, kill his father and mother, when they oppose his divine calling.'

" 'What! reverend father? I shudder.'

“‘I am not surprised at it. You are not yet a true disciple of Christ. You have not yet meditated on these words fallen from his mouth: “Children shall rise up against their parents, and shall cause them to be put to death.”’

“‘Revered father, your interpretation of the words of Christ rebels my reason and my heart; still, as you speak to me in the name of God, I must believe. But I will not dare give my mother the intelligence of my entrance into religion.’

“‘Do not write to her.’

“‘Not explaining to her the prolongation of my sojourn in Naples, she will recall me to the maternal house.’

“‘If it happens, you shall write to her that you are managing your marriage with the woman whom you love.’

“‘It will be a lie.’

“‘Certainly not. St. Liguori and the most celebrated theologians hold the opposite doctrine. Jesus Christ himself teaches us in his gospel, that only “those things defile the man which come from the heart.” Besides, our intentions sanctify our words and deeds; and more, I am a priest, and speak to you in the name of God, who has said, “He that heareth you heareth me; he that despiseth you despiseth me.” Have confidence, then. Remember that God, who orders you to embrace the religious life, will give you the means to be faithful to this vocation.’

CHAPTER XXIII.

PAUL'S DESPAIR.



VENERABLE chief, another day approached, on which I was to quit the world, consecrate myself to God, and devote myself to the apostleship. Stormy thoughts agitated my mind, and an indescribable bitterness filled my heart. God willed still that I should sustain again a horrible combat. The

religious life and the world, devotion and the senses, apostleship and love, disputed with my soul. I resisted for some time; but the struggle exhausted my strength; I fell conquered, and yielded to despair. 'Die,' thought I, 'since you live only to suffer, and God comes not to your aid! He cannot be a tyrant; he will be touched by your sufferings. Is he not a father to his children? Would he be a tiger, thirsting for their blood, I shall have but hastened my eternity of misery. Why should I remain upon the earth, where I shall live but a life of trials and sufferings?'

"I convulsively wrote my last wishes ; penned a few hasty lines to console my mother, and inform her of my death ; calmly seized a poniard, and directed my steps towards a lonely place.

"In the anguish of my soul, I had lost my way, and was surprised to find myself alone on the sea shore. 'Well,' thought I, 'death will be to me easier and more certain ; the waves will bury my body and my griefs.' Disrobing myself, I felt upon my breast the pledge of love, for me a token so soft and bitter, and an image of the Virgin, that my mother had hung around my neck on the day of our separation. A sigh escaped me ; my agony became extreme, and I fell into a profound lethargy. I imagined myself exposed in a frail bark upon the ocean, in impenetrable darkness. Around me the sea arose in angry surges. Unable to find the shore, I was about to yield myself to the mercy of the waves, when the woman I adored appeared to me in the distance, surrounded by a bright light. 'Look at me,' she said ; 'I will be your guide.' At the sight of her, I trembled with delight and hope. I directed my course towards her ; but the nearer I approached, the more the waves increased, and she disappeared. In despair I quitted the helm, and awaited death.

"Another luminous object attracted my attention. I recognized my mother. I heard her voice, saying, 'My dear Paul, come to me ; I will save you.' I immediately regained confidence and courage, and I seized the helm ; but the waves again increased, and the light vanished ; I no longer saw my mother. Disheartened, I abandoned the bark to the mercy of the waves.

"I was about to sink, when I saw through the

clouds a transparent light ; it increased, and a woman, beautiful as a divinity, appeared above the foaming waves, borne on curling clouds of light. She wore a tunic of dazzling whiteness ; her face beamed with celestial light ; her look was mild, her smile gracious. She said to me, in a soft voice, which was heard above the roaring of the waves, ‘ My son, I am the star of the sea ; the relief of the shipwrecked : I am the mother of God. Have confidence ; come to me, and I will conduct you to the port. I will be your compass upon the raging sea of life.’ And I felt as it were a hand of fire engraving on my heart the steadfast resolution of embracing the religious life. I felt a superhuman strength arise in me. As I directed my bark towards her, the tempest subsided, the waves became calm, and I soon regained the shore. She disappeared.

“ When I recovered my senses, I found myself prostrate on the earth. I heard a familiar voice saying to me, ‘ Arise !’ It was the monk, standing near me. I related to him my despair, and the dream of my imagination. His face became radiant ; his eyes kindled ; and he said to me in transport, ‘ Fall on your knees, and return thanks to God. That which you call a dream of the imagination is a peculiar grace of God. My coming to this place was providential. Do not harden your heart. God evidently calls you to the religious life.

“ ‘ Then, in the name of God, in the name of my authority as your spiritual father, in the name of your temporal happiness, and of the salvation of your soul, I bid you not defer to enter into religion.’

CHAPTER XXIV.

ENTRANCE OF PAUL INTO RELIGION. — HIS MOTHER
CALLS UPON HIM.



SOON after I entered into the monastery, I went to the superior, who put me these questions : —

“ ‘ Who are you ? ’ ”

“ ‘ A great sinner,’ I responded.

“ ‘ What will you ? ’ ”

“ ‘ To make penitence in religion ; to sanctify myself, and contribute to the salvation of souls.’ ”

“ ‘ Are you ready to renounce the world ? ’ ”

“ ‘ Yes, very reverend father.’ ”

“ ‘ Are you ready to go to the extremities of the world ? to accept all offices that the superiors will assign to you for the glory of God, your own sanctification, and the salvation of souls ? ’ ”

“ ‘ Yes, very reverend father.’ ”

“ ‘ Will you wear his livery of ignominy, bear unjustly in imitation of him, and for his love endure humiliation, false testimony, and injury ? ’ ”

“ ‘ Yes, very reverend father.’ ”

“He kissed me, exposed to me the duties and difficulties of the religious profession, and painted with enthusiasm its advantages and joys.

“He appointed for my confessor and director Father Francis, whom I considered as my friend and father. Then I began my novitiate.

“The superior led me into a cell, wherein, during thirty days, I was to remember, in the sorrow of my heart, the disorders of my former years, meditate on the importance of my calling, on the means of sanctifying myself, and becoming worthy of the apostleship. He gave me several counsels, and before going out of my cell, said to me, —

““My brother, in solitude God converses with the soul, and grants it his light. If the earth is cursed, it is only because the people do not reflect upon themselves; it is far from society that the fire of love kindles in the soul. There our soul flies as the eagle, and wanders in the highest regions; it contemplates heaven, admires its magnificence; then, lowering its looks, it contemplates the meanness of the earth, and her nothingness. It thus casts away the old man, clothes itself with the new man, and starts out of this *cénacle*, enlightened, purified, strong to fight for God; the retreat has generated the Christian heroes, the men of God.

““As to me, when I entered into religion, I became soon familiar with solitude, and enjoyed therein pleasures unknown to the world.

““Sometimes I felt a kind of superhuman power which carried me out far from the earth; truth appeared to me shining, and virtue full of charms. I

was in a kind of mysterious sanctuary, wherein I tasted a divine voluptuousness.'

"Having said so, he bade me kneel; extended his arm, and performed the sign of the cross over my head to bless me.

"Isram, I will not undertake to paint all I suffered during those thirty days of trials, and the first months of my novitiate. God alone has witnessed and knows how sad and bitter were my regrets and recollections; how incessantly and reproachfully I saw before my eyes the image of the woman the love of whom I trampled upon; my family, the affection of which I renounced; my brothers and sisters, whom I abandoned orphans and helpless; my poor mother, whose heart and existence I broke down, the grave of whom I had opened. The monks, to console and strengthen me, lavished on me the most encouraging words, the most affectionate regards and caresses; but all was useless. Would I had not believed that I was bound to obey them as God, as if they had been himself; I would have instantly left the convent.

"One morning the reverend father superior announced the arrival of my mother. 'Be strong against flesh and blood,' he told me; 'keep yourself constantly in the presence of God. Remember that if you are vanquished, you sacrifice your dearest interests for the present and future life. Your mother will be to you a fascinating serpent; beware then of her seductions. Speak very little, and be cautious in your responses. I will pray for you.'

"My heart beat with indescribable palpitations. I felt both fear and joy. I descended to the parlor, and

was about to kiss my mother, when she with a sign of her hand repulsed me, and turned her head; then casting on me fiery looks, she exclaimed, —

“‘Is it my son whom I see with this gown of friar?’

“‘I turned pale, and all my limbs were trembling.

“‘My mother,’ I answered, ‘be not irritated.’

“‘Can I believe what I see? And he is my Paul, the son whom I have loved so tenderly!’

“‘My mother, why now treat that son with so much anger?’

“‘You my son?’

“‘Still you know my feelings towards you.’

“‘Your feelings towards me? O, irony!’

“‘I wished to take her hand and kiss it, but she motioned me away, saying, —

“‘As much as I have loved you, as much you were unworthy of my love.’

“‘O my mother,’ I answered, ‘why such a harshness?’

“‘You have no longer a right to my love. A son who casts away the remembrance of his father, the tomb of whom is still open, who denies his memory, denies brothers, sisters, denies his mother!’

“‘O, no, my mother, I have not ——’

“‘Dare you call me by this name? You mock me!

“‘What! your father dies, your relations are in the deepest affliction, your mother desponding; and in such circumstances you renounce your family, mock the'r sorrow; you, son, deny your mother!’

“‘Ah! could you know my sentiments!’

“ ‘Your sentiments ! Your heart is harder than adamant ! You have unworthily deceived me.’

“ ‘God alone knows what I have suffered.’

“ ‘Where is that worshipped woman, who, you said, had won your love, and attracted you to Naples ? Where is the project of that marriage which was to make you so happy, to bring you again to the bosom of your family, and near your mother ? Hypocrisy ! It was to enter that convent. Great God ! he who was to honor the name of his father, to be his shame ! he who was the glory of his family, to be their ignominy ! he who was to be my consolation, my pride, to be the cause of my affliction and humiliation ! O, why has God permitted me to bear a son that should bring me in sorrow to the grave ?’

“ ‘My mother, pray let me justify myself.’

“ ‘Your justification would be hypocrisy and falsehood — nothing else. There is no justification for a son who denies his family, especially his mother !’

“ ‘Pray, listen to me. I did not find again in Naples the woman whom I loved, then.’

“ ‘Why then did you not return home ?’

“ ‘Because I resolved to embrace the religious life.’

“ ‘Who gave you such counsel ? Undoubtedly the monks. You will not confess it ; but they have been your counsellors. I am not mistaken.’

“ ‘A monk, it is true, has enlightened me.’

“ ‘Who is the man ? Barbarous ! seducer of a son ! torturer of the heart of a mother !’

“ ‘He told me what was society, and what the religious life.’

“ ‘Does he know society, to inform you about it ?’

“ ‘Who knows society better than a man who has seen its bitters and its sweets? Besides, he has lived therein a long while.’

“ ‘He has exalted your imagination, abused your youth and inexperience! The monster! Alas! could he know how much a son costs his mother, the want of him that her heart feels!’

“ ‘All that he spoke to me was for my own interests.’

“ ‘He has deceived you.’

“ ‘On the contrary, he was moved but by charity.’

“ ‘You say so because you do not know their hypocrisy. He spoke to you with ignorance and fanaticism.’

“ ‘No, my mother, it was with simplicity.’

“ ‘As if the monks were not ignorant and fanatic!’

“ ‘They have told me that what is termed in society ignorance and fanaticism is the truth.’

“ ‘Declare, if you dare, that that seducer did not invite you to enter into religion.’

“ ‘Had he done it, it would have been only by zeal, and for my eternal salvation.’

“ ‘Then he did?’

“ ‘O my mother, why put me such a question? All I may say is, I had long since resolved to enter into religion.’

“ ‘You had for a long while resolved to enter into religion? And you do not blush to tell me this! The monks must have wonderfully accustomed you to lie, that you can prevaricate with no shadow of shame.’

“ ‘Still I speak the truth.’

“ ‘This is beyond endurance: you rebel against me! A son abuse to such a point his mother! mock so

her credulity! You of course believe that I have forgotten that you went to Naples only a few months ago?’

“‘I had already proposed to enter the monastery before writing to you in Athens.’

“‘And you did not tell me your intention! Go, heartless son. You tear the bosom that bore you; you give death to her who gave you life. God will not bless you.’

“Saying so, my mother glanced at me with indignation. She was about to leave hastily the parlor, when I sprang, and, my whole frame trembling, grasped her arms, and fell at her knees, saying, —

“‘My mother, do not curse a son who loves you. Have pity on him. Let me speak to you.’

“‘O, hypocrisy!’ exclaimed she. ‘Well, speak, and finish the work of death.’

“‘I did not tell you that my intention was to enter into religion, because love had made me forget my resolution.’

“‘Why then did you come again to your first design?’

“‘Because, having seen no more the woman whom I loved, I did believe to be rid of her love.’

“‘Mistake.’

“‘Moreover, because I thought that my entrance into religion was the will of God.’

“‘Another mistake — foolish fancy. Why then have you not asked my counsel? Why have you entered the monastery without informing me about your determination? Great God! How little a son understands the heart of his mother! How little must his

love be for her, and why did you write to me evasive letters, and not inform me that you were in the convent?’

“ ‘O, my mother!’

“ ‘The monks are those who gave you such counsel? Answer! I understand it. They are the hypocrites.’

“ ‘My mother, perhaps you are mistaken.’

“ ‘Why then did you enter the convent?’

“ ‘Because I thought the religious life would make me happy here below, and would lead me more surely to heaven.’

“ ‘What blindness! In society you will be wealthy; and using in a Christian manner the gifts of God, you will taste the purest enjoyments. In society you will serve your country; and to serve one’s country acquires right to its gratitude, to the esteem of one’s fellow-citizens. In society you will possess honors; and honors surround us with consideration. In society you will have a family and a mother; and a family and a mother embellish life with great joys. In society you will have a wife. Ah, you cannot suspect what happiness the heart of a wife affords! how delightful it is to be the support of her feebleness, her defender; to accompany her in public; to see her admired; to be proud of her; to possess her hand; to study her looks, her smile; to adore her beauty; to rest on her heart; to enlase one’s life with hers; to bury one’s self in that sanctuary of the fireside, wherein the sole glance of divinity penetrates; to have children who are one’s own likeness, who, stammering, dearly unite one’s name with that of their mother. O, what delight and charms! And you believe that in the religious life you will be happier?’

“ ‘My mother, I know that society will afford me all the advantages which you enumerate. But what is the present time before eternity? The religious life is the road which can lead me therein.’

“ ‘As if your salvation was impossible in society!’

“ ‘I think it is.’

“ ‘My son, a false zeal blinds you; a false fear misleads you. Will you not save yourself more easily in the bosom of your family than in this convent among ignorant fanatics and superstitious men? They are so immoral that they daily are drunk, haunt houses of ill fame, and carry their licentiousness so far as to disturb families.’

“ ‘My mother, I believe that many among them are virtuous.’

“ ‘Say, rather, they are more artful and more hypocritical in concealing their immorality.’

“ ‘Why, mother, you exaggerate; besides, God calls me to the religious life.’

“ ‘Illusion. Has God descended from heaven to reveal it to you?’

“ ‘Of course not; but he spoke to me his will by the mouth of his ministers.’

“ ‘Has God revealed it to them?’

“ ‘He has said to his ministers, “He that heareth you heareth me; he that despiseth you despiseth me.” They have assured me that I should be damned remaining in society; that the religious life is the only way which can lead me to heaven. I ought to obey.’

“ ‘You aver, at length, that the monks have influenced you. And you have given faith to such an imposture, to such sacrilegious profanation of the words of Jesus

Christ? And you have not seen that they intended to deceive you, enrich themselves with your patrimony, and make you their victim?’

“‘It was not their intention; moreover, I wish to save myself.’

“‘My son, you do not know the world; you do not suspect all the artfulness and perfidy concealed under the devout and hypocritical exterior of the monks. They have unworthily deceived you. Trust in the word of your mother.’

“‘My mother, they have said to me that I must obey God rather than men — and to obey them is to obey God.’

“‘On my answer, my mother remained as annihilated. She concealed her face with her hands. I saw her weeping. She suddenly raised her eyes to heaven, and exclaimed, —

“‘Great God! I felt anger against my son, and he deserves only commiseration!

“‘Dear Paul, I have nursed you; I have watched day and night around your cradle; I have taken care of your infancy; I have consented, for your interests, to live far from you. God alone can appreciate all you have cost me — all which I have suffered on account of your absence. Nobody, except God, desires more ardently than I to make you happy for the present time. Then trust in my word.’

“‘I cannot. I should disobey God. From me it would be a crime.’

“‘No, Paul; God obliges a son to honor and obey his mother.’

“‘Certainly; but only when her will is not opposed to the will of the priests.’

“ ‘What a misfortune! Those hypocrites have misled my son so far as to stifle in him the laws of God and of nature.

“ ‘My dear Paul, since you are so obstinate that nothing can convince you, at least you will not be insensible to the tears of your mother.’

“ ‘God alone knows what I suffer.’

“ ‘Yield to filial tenderness.’

“ ‘Alas! I cannot.’

“ ‘In the name of my love for you.’

“ ‘O, my God!’

“ ‘In the name of your cradle and infancy. In the name of the gratitude which a son owes to his mother. I am your mother, and entreat my son.’

“ ‘My God, let me die!’

“ ‘Look at me! Do you feel my lips on your feet, and my tears which water them?’

“ ‘O, my mother, I shall die!’

“ ‘It is I who will die. My son, do you not see that if you resist, when I leave you I cannot live?’

“ ‘O God! why am I not allowed to cast away the teaching of the priests, and yield to my reason and heart?’

“ ‘I entreat you.’

“ ‘God! O, help me!’

“ ‘You have given up; tell me that you have again become my son.’

“ ‘I will pray to God for you.’

“ ‘I do not want that. Are you about to cast off this hideous gown? to leave forever your infamous seducers?’

“ ‘Alas! I must save myself.’

“ ‘And I, in the name of God, in the name of your salvation, I command you to obey me.’

“ ‘Alas ! I am bound to obey the priests rather than you.’

“ ‘Well, Paul, I have lain prostrate at your feet ; I now quit you, carrying in my heart the poison which will give me death. I bless you, poor victim ; but I curse with all my maternal maledictions your seducers, — the torturers of my son, — the murderers of a mother, — and this in the name of God ! What ! Stifle reason in the mind of my son ! kill his intelligence and heart ! and this in the name of God ! Monstrous profanators of the laws of nature, of Christ, and his gospel ! O, the day wherein I gave birth to my son was certainly an unhappy day ! and yet I rejoiced when he was born.’

“ ‘Venerable chief, these were the last words which I heard from the mouth of my mother. I had fallen unconscious on the pavement. They gave me restoratives, and when I became again conscious, I heard my mother weeping bitterly. She fell — and a moment after they carried her out dying. O, horrible remembrance !’

And Paul buried himself in a mournful silence.

CHAPTER XXV.

SUFFERINGS OF PAUL IN THE CONVENT. — LETTER
OF ATTORNEY.

AUL resumed : "I renewed my efforts to stifle my feelings ; but it was useless. The world appeared to me a charming abode, and the religious life as dark as a dungeon. All that my mother had said to me of wealth, honors, pleasures, family, chiefly of love and hymen, enchanted and seduced me. Apostleship, on the contrary, seemed to me a road strewn with thistles and thorns.

"The monks, moved by my sufferings, lavished on me encouragements and prayers. They surrounded me with the most affectionate regards, and exhorted me to console and fortify myself by all the resources of their charity. They often addressed me thus : "He that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved." Cheer up ; after tempest God gives calmness ; the day follows the night ; to winter spring succeeds ; "a woman, when she is in travail, hath sorrow because her

hour is come, but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world ;” all the saints who have been favored by God with extraordinary favors were nailed to the cross. Christ himself had to suffer before entering his glory. Cheer up, then, and have confidence. Persist in resisting and praying, and you will win the conqueror’s crown. You will, perhaps, even in the midst of the delight which will overflow your soul, regretfully think of your days of trial, and exclaim, as St. Theresa did, “ Either to die or to suffer ! ” ’

“ I then redoubled my efforts to pray and resist ; but it was in vain. I fell into a deep sadness. Father Francis, whom, by peculiar favor, the superior had given me for confessor and director of my conscience, — I say by peculiar favor, for I should have been bound by the rule to confess to the spiritual father, — Father Francis, I say, tried all means to master my imagination, settle my mind, and free my heart of its terrestrial feelings. He presented to me charming pictures of my future happiness in religion ; but I listened to him with indifference ; I remained as cold as marble. Hoping to succeed better, he discoursed with enthusiasm on the sublime regions of spirituality to which God would raise my soul.

“ ‘ Mysticism,’ he said, ‘ is the food of the Christian heroes, of the elect of God, of the predestinated. It is the mysterious ladder of Jacob, the feet whereof rested on earth, and the top reached the heavens. Meditation, of which I once talked with you, is its first step. From meditation, you will pass to the *spiritual pur-*

gation, namely, to the removal of your imperfections ; from the spiritual purgation to the *aridity of the senses* ; from the aridity of the senses, to the *substantial aridity of the soul* ; from the substantial aridity of the soul, to the *merry contemplation* ; from the merry contemplation, to the *contemplative rest*, which is the recollection of our soul under the divine influence ; from the contemplative rest to the *acquired contemplation*, which is the knowledge of truth by mere intuition ; and from the acquired contemplation to the *pure contemplation*. Then God alone will act in you ; your soul will be actionless, and enriched with the gifts that he, with full hands, will grant to you. You will pass from the pure contemplation to the *affirmative contemplation*, which consists in the intuition of created truths, as for instances, the felicity of the elect in paradise, the tortures of the reprobates in hell ; uncreated, as for instances, the divine omnipotence, justice, mercy, etc. From the affirmative contemplation you will pass to the *negative contemplation*, which is not the intuition of one particular truth, but the obscure intuition of truths ; from the negative contemplation, to the *supernatural recollection*, which is the entire yielding of the soul to God acting on it ; from the supernatural recollection to the contemplation called *rest*, which consists in the insensibility of the senses effected by the divine love ; from the contemplation called *rest*, to the contemplation called *shining cloud*. Then your soul will be dazzled by the divine light, exactly as our eyes are dazzled by the beams of the sun. You will pass from this last degree of contemplation to the *spiritual rapture*.

When you reach this step of the mystical ladder, your soul will be plunged in an amorous delirium, accompanied with chants, cries, abundant tears, dances, etc. God will afterwards grant to your soul the gift of *union*. Your soul will at first be actively united to God, namely, obedient in all things to the will of God, and afterwards passively united. Then it will neither see nor feel; it will have the clear thought of the presence and union of God. Such a union lasts never more than half an hour.

“ ‘ There are two other sorts of union : the union of *betrothal*, and the *consummated*, or, in other words, the union of *spiritual marriage*. The first is divided into three sorts : 1. Of ecstasy. 2. Of rape. 3. Of ravishment of the spirit. In the union of ecstasy you will lose so entirely the use of the senses, that you will neither see nor hear; that even you will not feel incisions made on your body. In the union of rape, God will ravish your soul so suddenly and violently, that your body itself shall be lifted up and made as light as a feather. In the union of ravishment of the spirit, your soul will be rid of the body, and will fly in the immensity of the heavens. In the consummated union, or spiritual marriage, there will be effusion of God into your soul, and of your soul into God, fusion of both into one, according to the whole tenor of the word marriage. This is the highest step of the mystical ladder, of which that of Jacob was the image. This is its top, reaching heaven.

“ ‘ My son, what will you then have to love on earth? What will you have more to do with the world? You will be so far distant from it, what will you have to

desire from it? God himself will fill all the faculties of your being. How pale and insignificant will the love of a woman, of your family, and of your mother be to you! You will swim in a boundless ocean of love. The gifts of God will be showered on you. He will send to you *visions*. They sometimes will be *external*, viz., discernible with your eyes; at other times *imaginative*, viz., attainable only by your imagination; and at other times *intellectual*, viz., within the reach of your intellect. God will delight to speak to you. When you will meditate on some religious truths, you will hear in your soul a kind of an unknown voice; this is what the mystical authors term *successive locution*. You will likewise hear out of your soul an unknown voice; you will hear it, either physically, or in your imagination, or in your intellect; this *locution* is called *formal*. God will send to you, too, *revelations*, namely, will recall to you futurity, the mysteries of the faith, the state of consciences, the predestination, the promotion to dignities and death of certain men, and so on.

“‘I, now, young friend, ask you if a mortal can expect a greater happiness here below? I ask you, rather, if, like the royal Psalmist, you will not find that your pilgrimage on earth is too long? If, like St. Paul who had been carried up to the third heaven, you will not be anxious to see your body dissolve, taking its flight to paradise, and unite to Christ? And do not think I have exaggerated, for all I have said to you is literally written in the *Theology of St. Liguori*.’

“Isram, Father Francis explained to me, with enthusiasm, the mystical doctrine of which I have given

you a sketch ; but I listened to him with indifference, and, in spite of all his efforts, remained cold. His theory appeared to me entirely absurd, sacrilegious, and foolish. Absurd, because it supposes that our soul is a mere machine ; sacrilegious, because it binds God to a human method ; and foolish, because a soul disorganized only, is capable of such dreams and feelings. When I said to him what I thought about it, he answered that I was guilty of a great sin — sin against the Holy Ghost, because I blasphemed against his grace ; sin against God and his saints, for God, he said, had led them through that sublime way ; sin of pride and disobedience, because I used my reason chiefly on a point so supernatural, and thereby disobeyed God and his church.

“I then abstained from thinking and judging for myself, and prayed God to inspire me with submission and faith in the teaching of the monks.

“Father Francis, however, hoped yet that through his persevering efforts he could tame my reason, my conscience, and my heart. I had not been, since my entrance into religion, bound to all the practices imposed by the rule upon the novices. My table was sumptuously served ; I was permitted to walk in the garden, to read, to write, to visit the monks in their rooms, chiefly to converse often with Father Francis, whom I considered as my friend and father. The reverend father superior informed that, far from forgetting society, my family, my mother, and the woman whom I loved, I incessantly thought of them, and felt their love increasing in my soul ; that, far from being attracted to the religious life and improving in the mystical science,

I was quite disgusted, and anxious to leave the convent ; he bade Father Francis say to me, that if I should return into the world I should commit a great sin, and that my eternal salvation would certainly be at stake ; that all I had to do was to observe, as the other novices, all the points of the rule, and to believe and obey blindly, as they did.

“ Father Francis began then to explain to me my obligations. The innumerable practices of devotion to which I had to be bound seemed to me mostly absurd ; but when he told me that I had to deem myself more despicable than a hog, or a heap of manure ; to reveal to my superiors all my thoughts and feelings ; to hold friendship as sinful, to denounce my fellow-novices, to die to the love of my family, of my brothers, sisters, and mother ; not only not to think of them, but even to hate them ; that I had to obey so passively and so blindly that I should resemble a stick motionless in itself, and borrowing its motion from the hand which carries it ; that I should think and feel as my superiors did, — I shrieked with despair, and my reason rebelled. Such doctrine seemed to me opposed to the gospel.

“ I still, in spite of my reluctance, tried to observe carefully all the practices which were imposed upon my conscience ; but my body alone bent itself, my soul could not. So, I, it is true, knelt before my superiors, lay down on the threshold of the refectory, ate below the table, planted cabbages, the roots up, and watered them ; turned upon one foot till I fell headlong on the ground ; and so on ; but all my soul rebelled, and cried to me, that such brutalizing practices were unworthy of a reasonable being, of man created in the

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likeness of God. The more Father Francis and the superior of the convent inflicted chastisement upon me, and prayed for my conversion,—the more I asked from God the forgiveness of my sins of pride, disobedience, and incredulity, the contrition of these crimes, and the change of ideas and feelings which I needed,—so much the more my reluctance increased. I felt wretched in the extreme. These incessant efforts, and my internal struggle to stifle in my heart the love of my family, brother, sisters, and mother, chiefly of the woman whom I once intended to marry, exhausted, at length, the strength of my body and soul. I then, in my despair, resolved to leave secretly the convent. I was about to execute my resolution, when Father Francis, who suspected it, threatened me with the divine vengeance, and with hell opening its waves of flames to bury me in their devouring depth.

“Two years, long and weary, had passed, and I had been during that time the prey of those relentless anxieties and sufferings, whilst I had not received a single letter from my mother; all I knew of her from the monks was that she still was living; they forbade me to write to her, and even to think of her. As soon as the time required for my novitiate was over, Father Francis and the reverend father superior compelled me, in spite of my repugnance, to take the three vows of religion, namely, those of *chastity*, *poverty*, and *obedience*.

“I was then tied forever to the convent and religious life; but my internal struggles, instead of diminishing, increased so much that I felt overwhelmed, and death became the most earnest longing of my soul. Having

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read in the Theology of St. Liguori, that it was laudable to shorten one's life ten years, I ate, drank, and slept so little, in order to die, that I looked as a walking spectre; as, on the other hand, I yielded fully to my sorrow, my melancholy changed into madness. Father Francis and the reverend father superior, noticing every day the failing of my health and the disorganization of my brain, were alarmed, and resolved to send me out of the convent. One morning I knelt before a crucifix, entreating God to have pity on me, and to send me death. Father Francis came into my cell, and informed me that I should accompany him to the superior's closet, wherein he waited for me.

"We went, and met with another monk, who held a big pack of rolls, and was engaged in a serious conversation with the superior. A moment after Father Francis presented me to them. I knelt before the superior, and kissed his hand, according to the rule of the convent. He bade me to rise, and said to me, with a paternal voice, —

" ' My son, since you listened to the calling of the Lord, and entered into religion, you have borne hard trials. However, cheer up; those very trials are the evident proof that your religious vocation is from God. We read in the Lives of the Saints, that all the favorites of God among his elect have been tried as you have been and still are. You suffer in recollecting what you have left in the world, your friends, your family, your brothers, sisters, and mother. You cannot forget the woman who had criminally won your love. You struggle against your mind, whose pride does not bend to a blind belief; and against your heart, the terrestri-

al affection whereof hinders you from celestial desires, and from obeying passively your superiors, the teaching, will, and orders whereof emanate from God. Notwithstanding, I repeat it, cheer up ; you will conquer. Your feet will shake off all this dust, that has been accumulated in your soul while in the world. Having noticed that your health is diminishing, Father Francis and I have thought that travel would be profitable to you. Then, you are to accompany Father Ignatius, whom I send to Russia. You will obey him as you would me. I have informed him about all the particulars of your past life, that he may direct you better.'

"He meant the father who held rolls of paper, and was conversing with the superior when I entered the closet.

" 'Reverend father superior,' I answered, 'send me wherever you will. To suffer and die here or elsewhere is to me indifferent.'

" 'My son, why yield to such feelings? They are sinful.'

" 'Since I live only to sin and to be unhappy, can I think and feel differently? Even can I hope to work out my eternal salvation? Certainly not.'

" 'My son, pray to God ardently; I, too, and all the fathers of the convent will pray to him for you. You may be sure that we will obtain from his mercy and bounty that you be a happy and a holy monk; that you work out your eternal salvation.'

"I did not reply, but I shed abundant tears. The superior, having uttered to me a few words of consolation, told me that he had in his possession many letters

which my mother had sent to me, but that he had kept them, and had not given me intelligence of their contents, lest he should kindle more ardently in my heart the love of my family and mother; that she had come several times to Naples, and solicited to see me in the convent, but without success; that she, in her blind fury, had intrigued with the ministers of the king to obtain by their intervention that the doors of the convent be opened to her; but that, thanks to God, all her endeavors had been vain.

“As he spoke, my features changed; a cold perspiration covered my limbs; I fell strengthless upon a chair.

“‘Your feelings are terrestrial and sinful,’ he said; ‘do not yield to them; cheer up; God will help you.’

“Fathers Francis and Ignatius, having pity on me, spoke to me consoling words.

“While the superior was writing a bill, his mind seemed quite absorbed in it. When he had written it, he came to me, and, with a serene face and a paternal tone, said, —

“‘My son, the voyage which you are about to undertake with Father Ignatius will be profitable to your health, and pleasing to you; will calm the perplexities of your mind, and the tempest which disturbs your heart. - It will settle your soul in your divine calling to the religious life. At your return you will study theology, and will be ordained a priest. Keep well in your mind that it is only in religion you can live happy, and work out the salvation of your soul. The circumstances, or rather miracles, of your calling demonstrate that it is the will of God. Therefore let the world be

dead to you. My son, I have just now written a bill which needs your signature. Come and sign.'

"I went to his desk.

"'But, reverend father superior,' I asked, 'what is this bill?'

"'It is useless for you to know what it is. Sign.'

"I read a few lines, and shrieked; the pen dropped from my hand, and I remained thoughtful.

"'What! my son,' he said; 'what is the cause of your sadness?'

"'Should I sign such a bill?'

"'My son, I am astonished at your question. It is merely a letter of attorney, giving me, before the laws of your country, the right to administer your temporal interests; to claim from your family your portion of paternal inheritance; and, if your mother, brothers, sisters, etc., die, to claim your rights. Is not the convent your home? Am I not your father? Are not the fathers of the convent your brothers and sisters? your family?'

"'But can I, in conscience, deprive my family, especially my mother, of the property which we hold from our forefathers?'

"'Certainly you are allowed it. Moreover, it is for you an obligation of conscience. And do not call them any longer your family. Are carnal kindred your true kindred before the eyes of God? Remember that Melchisedek had neither father nor mother; that these memorable words are written in the gospel: "While Jesus Christ yet talked to the people, behold, his mother and his brethren stood without, desiring to speak with him. Then one said unto him, Behold, thy mother and

thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee. But he answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? And he stretched forth his hand towards his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother." Then you must forget and deny your carnal kindred as being your family, and consider the fathers of the convent as your sole, true brothers, sisters, and mother, because they do the will of God the Father which is in heaven.'

" 'Reverend father superior, I do not doubt you are right, for you speak in the name of God, and you are his lieutenant on earth. Notwithstanding, in spite of my will, all the power of my mind, and all the feelings of my heart, rebel at your reasoning. May I not love my family, particularly my mother? I feel that while I have a soul I shall think and feel as I do now.'

" 'My son, you are quite mistaken. God will change your mind and your heart. You will cast away the terrestrial man, and clothe yourself with the spiritual. Sign this bill.'

" 'Reverend father superior, if you could know what my heart suffers, and the reluctance which I feel in my conscience, you would not oblige me to sign this letter of attorney. Of course I am not stopped by the consideration of my own temporal interests; for, as to myself, I do not care for money, — and, did I care for it, it would not be a matter of difference, — my grave is already open; I feel that my body is already falling in dissolution. But alas! I foresee that the ghost of my father will follow me every where, charging me with

ingratitude and injustice. I foresee that my brothers and sisters will accurse me, and that my mother will die with sorrow. And is it not too much to have caused the death of my father by my sins, — at least, Father Francis says so, — without causing in addition the death of my mother?’

“ ‘My son, as to your heart, you must stifle its terrestrial feelings; as to your conscience, it is wrong. Not only to sign this letter of attorney will not be a sinful deed from you, but to sign it is for you a strict obligation. Moreover, I prescribe it to you in the name of the holy obedience which you have vowed to me, and in the name of God, as his lieutenant on earth.’

“ ‘Isram, when the superior spoke these words, I felt as if it had been a sword piercing my heart. I took again the pen, and with a trembling hand wrote my name.

“ ‘My son,’ he said, ‘God will reward your obedience. Kneel, that I bless you; for you shall embark to-day.’

“ ‘Father Ignatius and I knelt, and he blessed us.

“ ‘Alas! my poor mother!’ I whispered in my sorrow.

“ ‘My son,’ he said, ‘pray God that you die to her love; that you die to her love so entirely that you might kill her at my order — which fate she deserves, because, opposing the vows of God upon you, she opposes his holy church. Let God guide you!’

“ ‘Father Ignatius and I bowed to him, and went out.

CHAPTER XXVI.

DEPARTURE OF PAUL FROM NAPIES.—HE ENCOUNTERS HIS MOTHER IN CONSTANTINOPLE.—SCENE BETWEEN THEM AND FATHER IGNATIUS.



ENERABLE chief, Father Ignatius and I embarked, a few hours after, to sail for Constantinople. We were accompanied to our ship by Father Francis. He gave me many counsels for my spiritual benefit; and when the anchor was weighed, he embraced me tenderly,

bade us farewell, and left us. This moment of separation was painful to me; for, though I was unhappy, I felt grateful to him for his charity towards me, and his zeal for the salvation of my soul.

"I thus left this land of Naples, which I had watered with so many tears; where I perhaps left lonely in her tomb, without one flower, without one tear, without even one prayer, the woman who had loved me, and the love of whom I bore in my heart. O, bitter recollections!"

On these words Julia burst into tears and sighs.

Paul suspended a moment his relation, wiped the tears which flowed from his eyes, then continued : —

“ Leaving the theatre of my misfortunes, the change of climate and a favorable voyage relieved my soul and strengthened my body. When from a far distance I saluted, perhaps for the last time, the land of my nativity, I had one recollection for my friends of infancy, one sigh for my family, and tears for my mother. Father Ignatius scolded me bitterly on account of my terrestrial and carnal feelings. ‘ Remember,’ he said to me, ‘ that you ought to be dead to the land of your nativity, to your friends of the world, to your family, and to your mother. Remember the examples of the saints. Have you not read that St. Francis Xavier, on going to the Indies, passed near the castle of his father, and that in spite of all solicitations and entreaties, he refused to visit his relations and his mother, though knowing that, losing that opportunity, he would see them never more. He not only refused to visit them, but remained without one thought for the paternal castle, without one recollection for the friends of his infancy, without one sigh for his family, and without one tear for his mother. Imitate him.’

“ We had just arrived at Constantinople, when we saw a ship which would cross and land at Anapa, through which city we had to pass on our way to Russia.

“ We were about stepping into the vessel, when a woman, who hurried along the quay, met our view. She directed her steps towards us. O, surprise ! She was my mother. Alas ! what a change had taken place in her appearance ! Her hair had whitened ; her fore-

head had wrinkled ; her eyes were hollow ; her cheeks had become pale and meagre. She was but the shadow of what she once was.

“ ‘Cheer up,’ the monk said to me ; ‘you already have triumphed over flesh and blood ; you can again be conqueror. I will pray to God, and watch over you.’

“ He drew back a few steps. My mother stepped before me. Her breathing was short and accelerated. All her features told the deepest affliction and indignation ; yet a kind of agreeable sensation seemed to rest over her violent feelings, she had not seen me for so long. I turned pale ; all my limbs were trembling ; I did not dare look at her. In the trouble of my mind I forgot even to bow to her. She rushed to my arms, and embraced me, saying, ‘My dear Paul, at last I see you again. At last I hold in my arms my beloved son. But, alas ! what do I see ? You are only the shadow of my son. What have you become in the hands of those monsters ? Where are the beauty and health of my son ?’

“ Fearing to yield to my filial feelings, I shrunk, but without uttering a single word.

“ My mother, suspecting, by my looks and my whole appearance, the agitation of my soul, said to me, —

“ ‘What, my son, the sight of your mother frightens you ?’

“ I felt moved by surprise, sorrow, joy, filial tenderness, and the fear of offending God, so that the words expired on my lips ; I could not answer. With an ardent aspiration, I entreated God to help me.

“‘Be not afraid, my son,’ she continued; ‘I feel against you neither bitterness nor anger; I merely have pity on your blindness.’

“I was tempted to rush into her arms; but the thoughts of the wrath and vengeance of God stopped me.

“‘My son,’ she said, ‘you are probably surprised at encountering me in this city.’

“‘Yes, my mother,’ I answered.

“‘I came before you to Constantinople, because I knew that you would have passed by Athens without visiting me; your conscience, fashioned by the monk, would have forbidden it to you.’

“‘It is true, my mother.’

“‘Well, my son, I forgive you easily; for a son is so far from feeling as his mother feels; particularly a son misled by seducers, and by anti-Christian doctrines.

“‘Please tell me; you are undoubtedly aware and recollect, that for several years I have written to you many times every month: why have you never honored me with an answer?’

“Isram, fearing by justifying myself to stir up in my mother harsher feelings against the monks, I did not answer her question.

“‘Paul, my dear son, answer.’

“‘Pray, mother, spare me an answer.’

“‘Spare you an answer? If you have been bad-hearted so far as to resist the tears, entreaties, and sorrow of your mother, refusing her during several years one word of consolation, you ought not to be sensitive to the confession of your harshness.’

“‘I love you too much to have given you this cause of sorrow.’

“‘I suspected it. I could not believe that they had so soon made you capable of such cruelty. Why, then, have you not answered me?’

“‘My mother, since you urge, I must aver that the monks did not give me intelligence, either of the contents of your letters or of their reception. They only said to me, that you were healthy, and resigned to my entrance into religion; but, alas! I see with my own eyes that they were wrongly informed.’

“‘Say, rather, my dear Paul, that they were well informed by my letters, and that they deceived you. Do you see now that they are liars and hypocrites? Do you understand that you have been and still are their victim—these monsters? A mother writes to her son, and they read and keep her letters, without informing him about it. And you, my son, are blind enough to believe that they are the lieutenants of God on earth! As for me, I believe, with all men of good sense, that they are true demons with human face.’

“‘O my mother, you sin against God in speaking against his priests.’

“‘Dear son, how blind you are! In what awful manner they have ensnared you! You wish that I consider as ministers of God men whose principles, teaching, and behavior are opposed to the laws of nature, to reason, and to the gospel? I cannot. And tell me, did they not forbid you to write to me?’

“‘Yes, of course; but they had a good intention. It was for my temporal happiness, and the salvation of my soul.’

“ ‘O, horror! Can a son be happy not loving his mother? Can he save his soul, not loving his family, his brothers, sisters, and mother, whom God bids him to love? What immoral, unnatural, and anti-Christian doctrine! Dear Paul, am I not right in saying so?’

“ ‘My mother, should I listen to the voice of my reason, to the cry of my conscience, and to the feeling of my heart, I should certainly believe and feel as you do; but the monks are ministers of God; they have been empowered to overrule my reason, my conscience, and my heart, even all the faculties of my being; I am bound to yield blindly and passively to their leading.’

“ ‘My son, they have deceived you; they do not hold from God this power, but from their pride, ignorance, fanaticism, egotism, and barbarity. Far from holding such power from God, the gospel condemns expressly their barbarous and sacrilegious profanation of reason, and of the laws of nature.’

“ ‘Pray, my mother, do not speak against the monks; for to deny that their power originates from God is a blasphemy against God himself.’

“ ‘My poor Paul, how heartily I compassionate you! Alas! this is what these wicked priests have taught you since they have seduced you. Have you completed your novitiate?’

“ ‘Yes, my mother.’

“ ‘Have you taken vows?’

“ ‘Alas!’

“ ‘Your hesitation makes me aware of what you have done.’

“ ‘Yes, my mother, I have taken the three religious vows.’

“‘What are these vows? Explain to me the obligations devolving upon you by these vows.’

“‘By the vow of chastity, I am bound to observe celibacy all my life; by that of poverty, I am forbidden to possess any thing in this world; and by that of obedience, I am obliged to think, believe, feel, and will, exclusively, as my superiors think, believe, feel, and will.’

“‘And you are convinced that such vows are conformable to the gospel, and pleasing to God? And you do not feel all the faculties of your soul stirred up, protesting against and rejecting such fanatical, immoral, anti-human, and anti-Christian principles? And your conscience does not rebel against such absurd and monstrous bonds?’

“‘My mother, I experience all this; but the monks say to me, that it is a temptation of the devil; that by consenting to these thoughts and feelings, were it once only, I should offend God, should sin against the Holy Ghost, which sin would be one of the greatest among all; one of those that are declared in the gospel to be irremissible.’

“‘My son, believe the word of your mother. Your conscience is not tied by these vows. Besides, I infer from your own words, that you have not taken them voluntarily.’

“‘It is true I felt a reluctance so strong, that I hesitated. It was only when the fathers imposed it on me as an obligation of conscience, as a condition of eternal salvation, that I gave my consent.’

“‘My son, would you believe that a man who, while he feels a poniard upon his heart, should promise money

to his murderer, would be obliged, in conscience, to redeem his word?’

“ ‘Certainly not; because his will bearing violence, he was not free.’

“ ‘Would you fear more the death of your body than the death of your soul by sin, and the loss of your eternal salvation?’

“ ‘I would prefer to bear death a hundred times, rather than to sin, and to be eternally damned.’

“ ‘Then, could the religious vows be laudable before God, you would be no more bound to hold your promises than that man attacked by a murderer would be obliged to redeem his word; for your will has borne violence, and you were not free in taking vows.’

“ ‘Alas! my mother, it is the cry of my reason, but the priests have the right to overrule my reason.’

“ ‘Great God, what blindness! What a misfortune for you, my dear Paul—for your family, chiefly for your mother. How ignorant and credulous were both your father and I, when we sent you to schools kept by priests! We were far from suspecting how deleterious was their teaching, which you have unfortunately too well received; which, with your years, have grown up in your soul in the same manner as the letters engraved on the bark of a young tree enlarge, when it grows up.’

“ Isram, when my mother uttered these words, she felt deeply moved, and abundant tears flowed from her eyes. I internally struggled against myself, lest I should offend God in yielding to my own emotion. A moment after, she said to me, as she was glancing at Father Ignatius, —

“ ‘Where do you go with this monk, who looks at you so eagerly?’

“ ‘We go to Russia.’

“ ‘Why have you not informed me of your voyage?’

“ ‘Because I was forbidden it by my superiors; and to disobey them would have been a violation of one of my vows, a great sin before God. Besides, I had very little time to write to you before I embarked.

“ ‘I have been bidden, in the name of the holy obedience which I have vowed to my superiors, to accompany the Father Ignatius to Russia. O my mother, let me go with him.’

“ ‘I will not. A son ought to obey his mother.’

“ ‘How happy I should be, if I was permitted to obey your maternal orders! But I ought rather to obey the priests.’

“ ‘God has not bound you to obey fanatical and hypocritical priests. He commands you to honor your father and mother; therefore, in the name of God, in the name of the authority which he has given me over you, I bid you to follow me.’

“ ‘Seeing the peril to which I was exposed, Father Ignatius had approached, and was listening to us. On the last words of my mother, he came to me, and said, —

“ ‘Brother Paul, remember that the Holy Ghost has said, “The parents of man are his enemies.”’

“ ‘What! my dear Paul,’ replied my mother, ‘I your enemy! Have I not nursed you with my own breast? Have I not spent days and nights around your cradle? Have I not, to bring you up, lavished the years of my youth, my caresses, my boundless love?’

Have I not consented to send you to Naples, and live far from you, separating, the bitterness of which maternal hearts alone can appreciate, hoping that the time which you would spend in Italy would be profitable to you? But alas! how unhappily I was mistaken! Have I not been from your birth to this day a martyr of my love to you? After this, my son, could you believe that your mother is your enemy?’

“‘What an impiety!’ exclaimed Father Ignatius. ‘A woman deny the words of God?’”

“‘I do not deny them,’ replied my mother, ‘but I reject your interpretation.’”

“‘This is another impiety,’ he said. ‘As if we were not commissioned by God to interpret the Scriptures! As if we were not endowed with infallibility!’”

“‘Fie! fie!’ my mother responded. ‘Spare me a conversation with you, for you should suspect what a mother ought to feel against monks who have seduced, blinded, misled, and deceived her son. I should fear to yield to my indignation. Paul, my son, God orders you to love your mother. Follow me.’”

“‘Brother Paul,’ Father Ignatius said to me, ‘remember that God hath said, “Do not yield to flesh and blood.”’”

“‘What a profanation of the law of nature, and of the gospel!’ exclaimed my mother, glancing at the monk with indignation. ‘Can a man, except he is as cruel-hearted as a tiger, trample so upon maternal love? Poor Paul! under the power of what monster hast thou fallen? O, leave the monks and come with me!’”

“I supplicated God to forgive the sins of my mother; for in being disrespectful towards the monk,

and in speaking against the ministers of God, she blasphemed against him.

“ Father Ignatius then replied, —

“ ‘ We read in the gospel, “ Another of the disciples [of Jesus] said unto him, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. But Jesus said unto him, Follow me ; and let the dead bury their dead.” Jesus Christ calls your son to apostleship ; you, his mother, have no right to oppose his divine calling.’

“ My mother turned to me, and said, —

“ ‘ My son, these were not the thoughts and the feelings of Jesus Christ. He said to his disciple, “ Let the dead bury their dead ; ” but did he intend to send him to the limits of the world before the death of his father ? did he forbid him to see him again, and to preserve for him the pure and noble love which the Creator put in the heart of a son for his father ? did he bind him to deny his family according to man ? did he impose upon him to disobey his father ? No ; Jesus Christ knew too well that it would have been to break the ties, indestructible ties, sacred ties, which unite the son to his father. He lived thirty years with his mother ; consecrated only three years to the dissemination of his gospel ; and more, he never went far from the country wherein his mother lived. O, a mother alone can appreciate the waves of joy which overflowed the soul from the tenderness of such a son ! On her prayer he did miracles. When, in the streets at Jerusalem, the people treated him with ignominy, and covered him with mud, like an earth worm, he willed that she should be present. When he climbed Golgotha, he willed that she should follow him. When he was

nailed to the cross, he willed that she should stay at his feet, and gather his blood. He gave her his last word, which is the masterpiece, and the most divine expression of filial love. As he was about to die, he willed not that she should be without a son : he said to her, pointing out St. John, the apostle whom he called his beloved friend, "Woman, behold thy son!"

"And why all this? Because he appreciated the love of a mother. He did know that the absence of her son digs up in her heart a bottomless gulf, which nothing can fill.

"My son, in imitation of Christ, love your mother, and love her as he loved his. Have pity on my desolation. You know all that I already have endured for you ; all the despair in which I have been thrown by the death of your father ; all the anxiety which your brothers and sisters give to me. Since you are the eldest of the family, you owe yourself to their affection and interests. You also owe yourself to my white hairs ; for, for a long time I have been on the declivity of life, and shall shortly go down to the grave. Leave then the monk, the monachal life, which is opposed to the love of nature, and to the gospel, and follow me.'

"My mother, your words tear my heart. Why am I not permitted to yield to your maternal commands? Alas! I am forbidden it by the monks.'

"They have no authority over you, and God says to you, "Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." I declare then to you, in the name of all my maternal rights, that you must leave the monks, and follow me.'

"Saying so, my mother cast on Father Ignatius such fiery looks that he did not reply.

"'My mother,' I said, 'let me at least accompany this monk to Russia. At our return, I will find you again in Constantinople.'

"'My son, I will not.'

"'My mother, I supplicate you. Perhaps in that time my conscience will permit me to go with you to Athens.'

"'But how much I shall fear never to see you again!'

"'My mother, be not anxious; trust in my return.'

"'Heaven! how much I shall suffer!'

"And we both wept bitterly. I kissed her; supplicated her to accompany me with her prayers and wishes; she blessed me.

"When I had drawn myself out of her arms, I heard her, sighing, exclaim, '*Will it be a last adieu?*'

"Alas! she was not mistaken. I was destined to suffer; to pass endless days among savage tribes; to live far from her; far from the woman whom I love, without even the hope of becoming an apostle. O, unfortunate mother, with what bitterness I have cruelly filled your soul! When dying have you not cursed me? And it is I who have killed you. Great God! I must be a monster among the criminals, that my fate be so horrible!"

Paul suspended his recital; there was much agitation in his soul. Then he resumed:—

"But why cause you, Isram and Julia, you, the blessed of heaven, to partake of the sorrows of an unfortunate?"

"Dear Paul," said Isram and Julia to him, "why should we not partake of the bitterness of your recollections? We wish to know all the particulars of your misfortunes."

He thanked them, and continued : —

"Father Ignatius and I had reached the wharf, when I saw my mother standing by me. She had followed our steps.

" 'My son,' she said, 'I will not that you go to Russia; I foresee that I shall never see you again. Come with me.' And grasping my hand, she drew me back.

" 'But, my mother,' I said.

" 'Come with me.'

" 'Alas! And my conscience! I cannot.'

" 'You may come with me. You must obey your mother.'

"At that moment I felt in my soul a dark tempest. I exclaimed, in my despair, 'God send me death!' And I was glancing alternately to my mother and to the monk.

" 'Brother Paul,' the monk said to me, 'your mother is not a Christian, but impious. Her feelings are terrestrial and carnal. She is to you a deadly viper. Leave her, and follow me.'

" 'Monster!' exclaimed my mother. 'Paul, I order you, in the name of God, to obey, and to come with me.'

" 'Brother Paul,' the monk replied, 'remember that Peter and the other apostles answered and said, (to the enemies of the gospel, and of Jesus Christ,) "We ought to obey God rather than men." God speaks unto you

by my mouth; then leave your carnal mother, and come with me.'

" 'The monster! O my son! do you not understand that he profanes the gospel? that he blasphemes against God, who has put in your heart filial love, and binds you to love and obey your mother? Could you leave me to follow him? Could you see me falling and dying on the pavement? Could you trample on my body?'

" My strength was so much exhausted that I almost fainted.

" 'Brother Paul,' the monk said, 'in the name of the holy obedience which you have vowed, I order you to leave your mother, and to come with me.'

" As I hesitated, he drew me to him.

" My mother grasped my arm, and, all trembling, kneeled supplicatingly to me, as the Father Ignatius drew me again to him, saying, 'Let us go where God calls us.'

" We had walked a few steps, and embarked, when I saw my mother lying motionless on the pavement. A multitude of people gathered around her, and carried her I know not where. All were looking at us, vociferating maledictions against us.

" 'Let me go,' I asked Father Ignatius; 'I want to see my mother, and it is my duty.'

" But he refused, saying, 'It is written in the book of Proverbs, "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death."' The sight of your mother would be dangerous to your soul; then you ought to avoid her presence, and stay here in safety.'

“ ‘She needs my care.’

“ ‘Others than you can assist her.’

“ ‘She perhaps is dying.’

“ ‘Though she should die, it would not be astonishing. Has not God said he is jealous? Nevertheless she opposed his vows upon you. That God punishes her with death and an endless reprobation, is all that her impiety and carnal feelings ought to let us expect for her. As to you, who have trampled under foot the carnal feelings of filial love, you will enjoy the blessings of God here below, and hereafter be eternally happy.’ ”

Having pronounced these words, Paul ceased to speak; his forehead darkened, his looks became fiery, and stood fixed on the ground. The change of his features told that painful recollections and bitter feelings agitated his soul. He was for a moment buried in deep and mournful silence, when suddenly folding his arms on his breast, he said with a trembling voice and the accent of despair, “What! I am blessed by God and accursed by my mother; to me what a dreadful enigma;” and he fell again into his sad reflections.

Isram and Julia, seeing the agitation of his soul, entreated him, though expressing how much they were desirous to know his adventures, to defer to another time the continuation of his account; but his mind was so abstracted that he had not paid attention to their words; he continued.

CHAPTER XXVII.

FATHER IGNATIUS AND PAUL EMBARK TO CROSS THE
BLACK SEA.—TEMPEST.—SHIPWRECK.—CIRCUM-
STANCES THAT BROUGHT PAUL ON THE MOUN-
TAINS.—RECOGNIZANCE.



HE anchor was weighed, and I lost sight of Constantino-ple. It would be impossible to describe to you my grief. I will only say that I was insensible to all the words of consolation of the monk. I fell into a state of deep dejection.

“Our voyage was at first prosperous. A favorable wind filled our sails: the weather was serene; the

azure sky cast its tints on the deep sea; and the sun, reflecting his beams upon the waters, silvered the flowing undulations of waves.

“In the evening the sun sank behind the billows in the midst of a golden cloud, which cast its glittering rays towards us. The stars gradually appeared in the vaulted sky; their light glimmered in the sea; we seemed to be sailing between two firmaments. These were the first days of our voyage.

“One morning a belt of gold was traced in the east.

The sun rose from the bosom of the waves bright and radiant, then slowly ascended above the horizon, deluging with light and heat the immense deep, and promising a fair day. But it had scarcely finished half its course, when a small cloud appeared in the sky ; a distant roaring was heard ; the depths of the sea became agitated ; the cloud increased, until it overshadowed us as a pavilion ; in the centre were dull, gloomy spots ; its bronzed edges extended to the bottom of the horizon, and seemed to rest upon our masts. Rapid lightning rent the sides, which shook with the crash of the thunder ; a furious wind blew from the north, rolling cloud upon cloud, wave upon wave, and dashing heavily upon our ship, breaking our spars, carrying away our unfurled sails. The waves ran mountain high, — the ship sinking into the depths again to remount. The billows lashed their foaming crests, and roaring dashed upward to the skies. Spouts of water discharged themselves upon our deck ; the rain fell in torrents ; the lightning in its fall emblazoned the air, and whizzed on till extinguished in the waters. The night was horrible.

“ Among the passengers who had fled for shelter to the stern, some prostrated themselves, and offered up fervent prayers, invoking Mahomet ; others uttered shrieks of despair, called upon their wives and children, and pressed each other to their hearts. Some kept a melancholy silence, or, in plaintive voices, sighed their last adieus to home and absent friends. All, in accents of fury and hatred, poured curses upon us, because, they said, we monks had provoked the Great

Spirit in causing the death of my mother. They wished to cast us into the sea.

"I retired into a solitary cabin, prayed for those ignorant persons, and prepared myself for death with calmness and resignation. I was not only resigned, but happy at the thought of quitting a life which had been so bitter, and in which I foresaw I should have so much still to suffer in working out my salvation.

"There yet remained a ray of hope; the pilot was faithful at the helm; the captain gave his orders, and the sailors executed skilful and difficult manœuvres with intrepidity. In the morning the tempest seemed to lull; the wind blew less violently; the clouds dispersed, and the heavens appeared. The cry was given, 'Land! land!'

"A few miles distant the Caucasus unrolled its dark forests, its mountains and their summits capped both in ice and snow. But, alas! the day appeared only to show us our condition. The ship, beaten by the waves, was leaking at all points; in vain all the merchandise was cast overboard to save her; she continued gradually to sink. Suddenly the shock of a great surge dislocated her frame. The sailors, worn out with their exertions, prostrated themselves upon the deck, recommended themselves to Mahomet, and silent and motionless abandoned themselves to their fate.

"Then the shrieks of the passengers, mingled with the roaring of the sea, presented a sad and terrible spectacle. Friend embraced friend; sisters clasped brothers to their bosoms; wives threw themselves into the arms of their husbands; sons clung to the necks of their fathers; daughters pressed their hearts to

those of their mothers ; all bidding an eternal adieu. I commended my soul to the blessed Virgin, recited the prayers for the dying, and loving nothing on earth that I was permitted to love, waited without regret the end of my trouble. It arrived.

“The dismal ship floated with difficulty on her side. A great number of passengers rushed into the boats, and were swallowed up. Many, wishing to die together, entwined their arms, threw themselves into the sea, and disappeared. Some, to save themselves, seized whatever came within their grasp, and were drowned. Others lashed themselves to the rigging and cordage, hoping still longer to contend with death, and perhaps save themselves.

“A wave carried away the monk, who did not face death without fear, but, pointing towards heaven, said, ‘Alas ! how hypocritical and unhappy has been my life, and how dreadful is my death ! I cannot repeat confidently these words of the royal prophet : “I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord.”’ I then bound myself to a plank, and committed myself to the mercy of the sea. During several hours I was tossed upon the waves, not knowing where they would bear me. I raised my heart to God in fervent aspirations. I prayed to Mary, the morning star, who had already been helpful to me. My prayer was heard. Land was not far. I heard the surges lashing against the reef, and breaking against its steep shore. I believed my last moment had arrived ; but a wave threw me into a creek, and left me on the sand between two rocks. Exhausted by my exertions, I remained for a considerable time extended

on the sand, without motion or strength. I then arose, addressed a prayer of thanksgiving to the mother of God, and walked along the beach to assist those whom the waves might have spared. I saw neither bodies nor fragments of the wreck. Weakened by hunger and fatigue, I entered the forest; I listened and looked around me, but my search was vain; no habitation was near; I heard not a sound of the human voice. I was in the country of the little Abazie.

"I stopped at a brook whose waves ran murmuring by, and quenched my thirst; ate some wild roots, removed the thorns from a small cave, and laid down to pass the night. It was near the close of day. The sea was more calm, the foaming waves broke with less fury against the shore; the tempest was no longer heard, but in a distant, hollow sound. The clouds, which I had seen accumulated above me, were flying in confusion and scattering in the skies. All nature was silent, and seemed to invite me to that repose of which I was in great need; but I could not rest, for my clothes were saturated with water, and I was benumbed with cold. I sought means to procure a fire, gathered some wood, and by rubbing two dry sticks together ignited them. When I had warmed myself, I laid down, and overcome by fatigue I slept profoundly.

"In the morning the scene was horrible. I ran to the beach, and saw scattered here and there planks, ropes, broken masts, and a great number of corpses; among them, that of the monk. I buried him in the sand, erected a small cross over his grave, recited 'De Profundis' for the repose of his soul, and quitted the place, praying him to be my guide to heaven. Still his

last words had made upon me a sad impression. I walked slowly, with sad and painful reflections revolving in my mind. All the horrors of my situation were pictured to me, and I said, 'I am here alone on a barbarous coast, without acquaintances, without friends or relatives, without means, and without a shelter. Shall I remain in this solitude? But where shall I find nourishment? How shall I provide for my daily wants? Can I live isolated from society, without exchanging a thought with a fellow-being? Will not my soul be melted by the fire of solitude, as wax by the heat of the sun? Shall I enter this savage tribe? But will they receive me? Shall I understand the language? Have I authority and commission to preach the gospel to them? Shall I return to Italy, and reënter Naples? But that will open again the wounds which love and the world have inflicted on my soul. There I shall have to sustain the same conflicts. Shall I go to Russia and enter a monastery of my own faith? But I am unknown; and if I go shall I be received? Shall I return to Athens to my mother? No, for I believe God has called me to a religious life.'

"What vain reflections! What foolish thoughts! Had I the intention of returning to Greece or Italy, could I go? Do I know the road leading to Anapa? Could I leap the ravines and torrents, climb the rocks, swim the rivers, sleep on the ground, defend myself from the fury of wild beasts, find my way through impenetrable forests? and where can I obtain food? Should I be able to reach Anapa, I have no means; would the Mahometans or Russians take me in upon charity? These thoughts drove me to despair. I

began to envy the fate of the monk. I had in perspective either long suffering or a speedy death, which I could find in suicide. From the first I recoiled with terror ; at the second I shuddered with horror.

“ Thus absorbed I walked unconsciously, when suddenly raising my eyes, I saw near me the place where I had been (at least I thought so) saved from the waves by the blessed Virgin. I knelt, and prayed her to obtain from her Son the light and strength of which I was in need. I felt my prayer was heard ; my soul was filled with confidence and courage. I arose, no longer doubting that if God sent me such severe trials, it was the better to prepare me for a religious life and apostleship.

“ I directed my steps along the sea shore, and after several hours’ walk, I reached high hills which rose to the foot of a mountain. I pursued for some time their intricate paths, and at length discovered at the entrance of a wood some lonely huts, formed of the green branches of trees woven together ; they were the habitations of several families of the Little Abazie. Their language being unknown to me, I made them comprehend by signs that I had been shipwrecked, and they shared with me their hospitality. When they returned to the mountains, I accompanied them, and took charge of their flocks.

“ For nearly a year I lived in the forests with men of uncivilized manners, dissolute morals, plundering and cruel habits. All my consolation was prayer, the hope of returning to religion, and the thought that I might expiate the errors of my youth. God alone has known the privations to which I was subjected ; the

humiliations I had to bear ; all the bitterness in which I was daily steeped ; and above all, what I suffered from my loneliness, and the interior struggles which constantly arose in my soul. At last a favorable opportunity offered for me to go to Anapa. Relying upon Providence for the continuation of my voyage, I prepared to avail myself of it, when unexpectedly the Lesguis fell upon the Abazie, entered the valley, and made me prisoner. Such, venerable chief, were the events which threw me with the Abazes, placed me in the hands of the Lesguis, and brought me into your country."

During the recital of Paul, the face of Julia expressed various emotions ; her eyes dilated, her countenance glowed, her bosom heaved, her searching glances seemed to penetrate into the depths of Paul's soul, and rekindle some ardent love which had been consuming her heart. Isram, on the contrary, had listened with calm attention, serious but affectionate interest, and restrained compassion. Large tears had more than once moistened his eyes.

When Paul ceased speaking, Isram said to him, "Young Greek, you have suffered much. Your life, up to this time, has been very unhappy. You have been a victim to the ardor and impetuosity of youth. You have been the sport of your imagination, of the righteousness of your mind, and of the generosity of your heart. The prejudices of your education and your reason, the teaching of the priests and the gospel, your conscience and the fear of hell, filial piety and a false devotion towards God, a laudable love and the monachal fanaticism, have in turn contended with your

soul. Listening to all those voices, to each you have offered sacrifice. Which will be victorious, to which you will offer yourself a holocaust, I know not. As to your Catholic belief, I have nothing to say, except I wish that it could be profitable to you and to the Christians whom you will evangelize." Isram ceased, and seemed absorbed by painful reflections. Paul reproached himself for having afflicted the affectionate old man in having recounted the history of his misfortunes, and remained for some time silent. Besides, he was exhausted by fatigue, and deeply affected by these painful recollections.

Julia forgot her own sadness, and addressed him those words of consolation which only a woman can say, to revive the serenity of the soul. But raising his eyes in a transport of sadness, regret, and despair, he exclaimed, "I console myself! Never, should I live as long as the world, the struggles with which my soul contends will never end. Love, my mother, and apostleship! Love! O, it would be necessary to pluck out my memory and my heart to erase the remembrance of her I love!" Paul paused a moment, then in a transport of frenzy he opened his bosom, and kissed convulsively a golden heart, and in a trembling voice said, "I love her! I shall ever love her! I shall live and die with her image in my memory, and her love in my heart."

At seeing the heart Julia was surprised. She hurriedly opened it, and recognized her own hair.

"I again see my best beloved!" she exclaimed, and fainted.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

JULIA SEEKING SOLITUDE.—INTERNAL STRUGGLES
OF PAUL.

O see Paul, whom she had not expected to see again, had thrown Julia into the delirium of happiness. All her wishes were crowned; she passed to a new life. Yet she durst not yield to her joy; she was reserved in her transports; her felicity was mingled with bitterness. She noticed that Paul was becoming thoughtful and melancholy. He avoided her presence, and did not dare look at her; he seemed to seek solitary spots, and spoke not of love. The struggle was renewed in his soul. One day she was walking under the branches of apple trees. She passed through the clusters which surrounded the cottage, entered a path bordered with a bush of *aubépine*, and, distracted, picked from it some flowers. She disappeared a moment behind that curtain shining with whiteness; she appeared again, and winded with a murmuring water, bordered with willow trees, which shaded her with their *olivâtre* foliage. Her visage was veiled. She stepped slowly; then

stopped, and, thoughtful, pressed in her white hands young rosebuds, resumed again her walk, caressed with her flowing robe the flowers which carpeted the meadow, and with her light foot hardly bent in the fields the leaves of vervain. She was going to dream and weep in solitude. Suddenly she saw Paul, who, seated on the bank of a torrent, seemed to be buried in a profound revery. She silently approached, and heard him saying, "My God, when will thy wrath be appeased? I must be a great criminal, that thy vengeance cleaves to me under all the heavens; that thou condemnest me to a miserable existence; that thou exposest me to all combats, and permittest me to fall in my conflicts; that I am a prey to remorse. To obey thy priests, I have from infancy trampled upon my reason, and stifled in my heart the most generous and noblest feelings. I have denied my family, my brothers and sisters, my mother, to whom, probably, I have given death. I have struggled at every hour of the day against the love of a woman whom I adore. I have buried myself in a convent. I have crossed the seas, been shipwrecked, and lived among savage colonies. I have been prisoner and slave; and now, on these mountains, thou callest me to sustain dreadful conflicts, to meet the being whom my heart loves, though I am forbidden it by thy priests. I have to this day resisted, but I feel that I can no longer endure the trial. O my Lord, since my life is a tissue of sufferings, since the prolongation of my days is but the prolongation of the chain of my crimes, I pray thee make me die. For me there is no hope in this world. I shall be the accursed Cain, whom thy priest spoke of to me. I

shall wander in all countries without finding rest; and when my long wandering shall end, the doors of hell will open, that I may partake with the reprobates their endless punishments. O, the day of my nativity was indeed an unhappy day!"

Paul ceased to speak, concealed his visage in his hands, and fell again into a deep revery. Julia heard him sigh, but durst not appear to him. Suddenly he raised his eyes to heaven, and said, —

"My God, deliverest thou me from despair? Sendest thou me the sweet thoughts and pleasures which pervade my soul? Thou perhaps hast not accursed me. I perhaps am only a victim of the prejudices with which the priests have imbued me from my infancy. If thou hast given me the flambeau of reason, it is in order that I walk by its light. If thou hast given me a conscience, it is that I rule my deeds according to the knowledge which I have of thy will, and not according to the caprices of men. If thou hast given me a heart, it is that I love my fellow-beings, my family, my brothers, sisters, and mother. If love has root so deep in my soul, it is thou who hast planted it therein. O if it was so, how complete would be my happiness! Ah, dear Julia, what happy days I should live with you on these mountains! The years and the sufferings having cemented our love, it would be eternal. Having given me life and liberty, you would complete your gift in making me happy. Our souls would have but one thought; our hearts would beat but with one feeling. Together, the same golden chain riveted in our hearts, we would walk the pilgrimage of life; and if some cloud should darken our voyage, it would dis-

appear under your looks. What should I not forget in your arms! Yes, I adopt the mountain for my country. I open my heart. Let love, that I tried to stifle therein, take a more rapid flight. Julia, my best beloved, I worship thee, and forever."

"And Julia loves you," a sweet and trembling voice answered. It was a voice known and dear to him.

Paul rose with a sudden start, and saw Julia, who stood by him, pale, her eyes bathed in tears, and modestly inclined to the earth. Astonishment, joy, love, and embarrassment, appeared on his face. He seized in his burning hand the cold hand of Julia; and they hurried from the spot, not daring to exchange one glance or a single word.

"Dear Julia," asked Paul, after a moment, "how has it happened that you have come to this lonesome spot?"

"I wanted solitude," she answered.

"But Isram ——"

"I had to spare him the sight of my sadness."

"Please tell me the cause of your sorrow."

Julia cast down her eyes, and did not answer.

"Excuse me, Julia," said Paul; "my question was indiscreet."

"Paul," she answered, "you ought to suspect the cause of my affliction."

"I understand your answer. What! you had for me no other feelings than those of contempt? You were benevolent enough to accept a love that I had sworn to you; you have exposed your honor and safety to give me life and freedom; and for all gratitude and

reward of these inappreciable gifts, I struggled against myself to rid my heart of your love; I intended to fly these mountains, and forsake you."

"Paul, I did not despise you. Witnessing the trouble of your soul, I had for you but a feeling of compassion and sorrow. I comprehended all you had to suffer struggling against religious prejudices."

"You, then, have forgiven me."

"Paul, I have not to forgive you, for you have not injured me. You have, on the contrary, to pardon me for having been, against my will, it is true, one of the causes of your sufferings. I have — why not aver it? — endured unspeakable ills; but you have just now blotted out in my soul even the recollection of all I have suffered on account of you."

"My God, I bless thee. Thou hast led me to these mountains, that I may still live happy days. Dear Julia, can you tell me the circumstances that brought you to Naples, and recalled you so soon and so suddenly to Caucasus?"

"My grandfather had sent me to that city to receive a European education. I had lived three years in that place, when we met in a church, whereto I accompanied a Neapolitan lady ——"

"Ah! for me what delightful and bitter recollection!"

Julia sighed profoundly, then added, "God alone witnessed all that I have suffered. Sorrow has changed my body and soul so much that you have not recognized me on these mountains."

"The whole of your being that attracted my soul inspired in me suspicions; but how could I have

presumed that so distant a country had been your cradle? Besides, many years have passed away since we saw each other; and we suffered so much in body and soul that we could not know each other."

"Alas!"

"O, what a dreadful combat it was in my soul! To my eyes you were so adorable, and the fear of offending God by destroying his priests preyed so powerfully on my mind!"

"The account of your adventures, or rather misfortunes, has caused me to comprehend how much religious prejudices have tortured your soul. But if the sparkling flame is not the most ardent fire, in matter of heart the love that can be painted is not the most violent."

"Dear Julia, at your last words I feel that my soul is overflowing with happiness; but tell me, why did you not, while in Naples, make me aware of your dwelling and departure?"

"Because the friend of my family, who had the care of me in Naples, opposed our love; because, my grandfather recalling me suddenly to Caucasus, I had no time to give you intelligence of my departure. All I was able to do was to send you a token."

"How many soft, and withal bitter, thoughts assail my memory! What feelings you awake in my heart! But, tell me, how has it happened that you have not accepted an alliance on these mountains?"

"Because, when a woman loves, it is forever."

"O Julia, can I but worship you? I would consent to endure again for you the horrible martyrdom

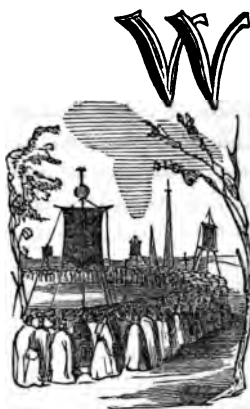
which I have already suffered. In refusing a husband you have probably afflicted Isram and your mother; have you not?"

"Certainly. But for me it was a duty, and for my heart a want. I unveiled to them my secret only when my dying mother entreated me eagerly to accept an alliance. Both respected my feelings, and Isram never more spoke to me of marriage."

"Dear Julia, on this mountain, near you, what else can I desire from heaven?"

A half glance, a veiled smile, and a celestial animation in her features, were the only answers of Julia. Paul was raptured to that inexpressible delirium of love that has been felt by those only whose lips have not exhausted the inebriating cup of the possession of a worshipped woman. They said no more, but arose and walked homewards. Their lips were mute, but there was in their looks a burning eloquence—sweet and indescribable mysteries enacted in their souls. They had soon, without being conscious of it, entered the villages, crossed the orchards, and a moment after reached the paternal home.

CHAPTER XXIX.

HAPPINESS OF THE INHABITANTS OF THE VALLEY
OF THE OSSETES.

WHILST Paul was in the valley, he witnessed every day the veneration of the Ossetes for Isram, and the brotherly feeling which reigned in the tribe. Emulation and good manners having honored labor there, fortune was almost equal. Lordship, aristocracy, and privileged social station being excluded, the most perfect union existed among families. The people limiting their ambition to the cultivation of their fields, all were in a modest competency. Sobriety made the people strong and vigorous. Humane and hospitable in peace, they were valiant and terrible in war. A small number only died with diseases. They preserved even in their old age the verdure of youth, a healthy and vigorous mind. Woman, who was reinstated there, and considered as the companion that God has given man, made it her happiness to make her companion happy. Children cherished their parents, who brought them up not with pride and severity, but with love. If any contention sprang up among

families, it was submitted to Isram, whose justice and virtue caused him to be regarded as an oracle. He divided heritages, stipulated the contracts, regulated the interests. He was the guide of the ignorant, the support of the feeble, the defence of the widow, the father of the orphan ; he had consolation for all the distressed.

Sometimes he went into the cottages to fortify the old men against the terrors of death ; to visit the patient, and encourage them to support their sufferings ; to represent to the spouses the necessity of a close union ; and to teach the young respect, docility, and love of labor ; to engage them to practise virtue, not in representing it as severe, but in painting its charms with agreeable colors. At other times he went into the fields, and had pleasure in assisting at the merry sports of the shepherds, who, touched with his affability, were more disposed to listen to and practise his lessons. He exhorted the young men to accustom themselves to labor, and to stand fatigue. He approached the ploughmen who raised up their furrows, or who, spade in hand, painfully dug up the earth, and always found some words which sustained their courage. To keep their minds in agreeable thoughts, he spoke to them of prairies tufted and adorned with flowers ; of golden harvests ; of clusters of grapes which the knife of the vintager detached from their branches to press the empurpled wine ; of the trees of the orchards burdened with fruits, and of granaries abounding with produce of all kinds. He conversed with them, also, about the joy they would feel in the bosom of their families, when, in the time of repose, after returning

from a distant chase, they would find abundance around the fireside.

Paul, pleased with such a delightful spectacle, accompanied Isram in all his visits to the tribe. One day, returning to the fireside, he said to him these words: "Venerable chief, the inhabitants of this valley are kind and affectionate, sober, and friends of labor. Children are submissive to their parents. Young men respect old age, are laborious and modest. All families live in harmony, and seem to form a single family. Peaceable in the fields, your people are redoubtable warriors in combat. Without any ambition for enlarging their country, they would die to a single one in defence of their firesides. They have not mosques, and they love prayer. They are disciples of the Koran, and they regard each other as brothers. To me it is most astonishing that, surrounded with barbarous people, who are without faith, without morals, and without religion; who are enemies of labor, quarrelsome, destructive, and sanguinary; it is, I say, astonishing that they have been able to sustain themselves against the contagion, to retreat from the evil, not yielding to the corruption of their neighbors; and even to resemble so little the rest of the tribe of the Ossetes. Let me ask you how it is that you are among them, and that, being not a child of the tribe, they have chosen you for their chief and their father."

"Young Greek," the old man answered, "as now the last rays of the sun gild the horizon, let us go home and rejoin Julia. To-morrow I will satisfy your desire."

CHAPTER XXX.

ISRAM COMMENCES TO RELATE TO PAUL THE HISTORY OF HIS LIFE. — PLACE OF HIS NATIVITY. — HIS TRAVELS THROUGH EUROPE. — HIS INQUIRIES ABOUT CHRISTIANITY. — HIS INVESTIGATIONS ON TRUTH. — HE RENOUNCES HIS RELIGION.



ISRAM was faithful to the promise which he had made to Paul. He conducted him to a retired place, and spoke to him thus: —

“ I was born in Constantinople. My father was a wealthy effendi ; my mother died a few months after I was born. In the days of my childhood my father confided to my young memory the first chapters of the Koran, explained them to me, and soon after taught me the whole of it. In nourishing my mind and my heart with the doctrine of Mahomet, he impressed on my mind a sovereign dislike for the gospel, and I vowed in my heart a profound hatred against the Christians. Esteemed because he was in honor, and feared because of his power, of his absolute will, and the fa-

naticism of his zeal, he was the ruler of believers, who hated him; the tyrant of subalterns, who suffered in silence; and the terror of his slaves. He was accursed by all, and he often remarked to me, 'There are two classes of men, one who command, the other who obey. The one oppress, the other bear oppression. As those who obey are more numerous than those who command and oppress, it is necessary that the latter be despotic. My son, you are destined to command and oppress; then do not forget my teaching, and remember my examples.'

"Such a doctrine had no echo in my mind, and still less in my heart. I admitted a social hierarchy, but I could not believe, and above all comprehend, that an intelligent creature, made by the hand of God, should be the fatal victim of the arbitrary will of his fellow-beings. I saw with horror the tyranny and cruelty of my father; the bad treatment and tortures with which he delighted his eyes. However, from fear of his anger and his vengeance, I dissembled my thoughts and my sentiments.

"One day, I discovered in his library a New Testament; I read it with avidity. What was my surprise and delight, when I found in it a sublime doctrine which ravished my mind, and a code of morals which filled my heart; when I found all the wants of my being and of the human family in these divine words, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind; this is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it — Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.'

"Then I changed from the blasphemy of the person of Jesus Christ to the admiration of his life and his heroic death ; from the dislike of his doctrine to enthusiasm and faith ; from hatred against the Christians to the desire of knowing them, and making myself one of their fellow-disciples. The Bible and the gospel became my usual and favorite reading.

"As I grew in age, these ideas and desires grew stronger in my soul ; I earnestly wished to see if the grain of mustard seed, the word of Christ, had become a great tree, which is to shelter under its foliage, in after generations, the entire human race ; if already it had yielded happy fruits to the people whom it sheltered. I then requested my father to allow me to undertake a long voyage, to which project he willingly consented, because he was wealthy, and he hoped that the instruction that I might acquire would be a recommendation when I should return to my country.

"I spent many years travelling over the kingdoms, empires, and republics of the civilized world ; visited their cities and their capitals ; studied the manners of their people, their monuments, arts, commercial relations, and their progress in science. I searched into their archives, and examined the books of their voluminous libraries. I informed myself, above all, with their philosophical opinions, their religious faiths ; with their rites and ceremonies. For that purpose, I listened to the lessons of the most erudite professors ; conversed with the most distinguished members of the scientific societies and universities. I went to churches,

and heard the most celebrated ministers; had frequent conferences with the priests and preachers of eminent knowledge, and discussed often with divines and doctors. But my astonishment was extreme when I saw that, among Christians, some believed not the gospel; the greatest number did not comprehend it; and scarcely any practised it. I was distressed, above all, when I heard Christians who believed not the gospel dispute, and say, —

“ ‘Truth exists.’

“ ‘We may neither deny nor affirm.’ *

“ ‘There is a God Creator.’ †

“ ‘There is no God Creator.’ ‡

“ ‘There is only one God. The supreme and infinite power is indivisible.’

“ ‘There are many Gods, and their number is indefinite. All recognize one master, and each of them has a special power.’ §

“ ‘God is eternal. He has created the world in time.’

“ ‘The world is a *great whole*, which *great whole* is uncreated; it is eternal. This *great whole* is God, and God is this *great whole*.’ ||

“ ‘There is a Providence. He is vigilant, and governor of the universe.’

“ ‘Chance directs all. Destiny rules all. Too many evils overflow the world for a divine Providence to rule it.’ ¶

“ ‘The breath which animates is a spiritual sub-

* The Sceptics.

† The Theists.

‡ The Atheists.

§ The Polytheists.

|| The Pantheists.

¶ The Fatalists.

stance, impalpable to matter. It is indeed immortal by its nature.' *

" 'The breath which animates is, it is true, a matter intangible by the senses, but only because the particles which compose it are purer and more subtile than the common material beings. It is destructible and mortal, because it is a compound being; and a compound being is subject to decomposition.' †

" 'An animal has life and sensation. It is then a mere machine, which these two springs move fatally. As to man, he has, besides life and sensation, intelligence, sentiment, and will. He thinks, then, and determines freely.' ‡

" 'Man has neither intelligence, sentiment, nor will. His sensations are merely higher than those of an animal; but they are of the same nature.' §

" 'From created beings to God there is a connection. From man to God there is, besides this connection, a bond of duty, because man, and man alone, has liberty, which generates duty.' ||

" 'From created beings to God there is an affinity of existence; it is all. A blade of grass is unworthy that we preside over its destiny. From man to God, the same affinity exists, but not a bond of duty. Could God, the infinitely great, the infinitely perfect, make a contract with the infinitely small, and the infinitely imperfect?' ¶

" 'From man to God there is a bond of duty. The

* The Spiritualists.

† The Materialists.

‡ The partizans of free arbitration.

§ The Sensualists, or opponents of free arbitration.

|| The believers of merit and demerit.

¶ The Deists.

expression of duty is religion. Religion is the conformity of our acts with nature. There is, then, a natural religion. Since two substances compose our being, viz., the one invisible, the other visible, there are then two kinds of worship in the natural religion, one invisible, the other visible, viz.: one internal, that of our reason, which recognizes the sovereign domain of God, our dependence on him, submission to the duties whose knowledge he has given us; the other external, the worship of the visible substance in us — that of our bodies.’*

“‘The visible part in us has not liberty, consequently is not bound by duty. Natural religion supposes, then, only an invisible, an internal worship — that of our reason.’†

“‘Duty supposes sanction. There is, then, a recompense for its observance; punishment for its violation. The recompense of a faithful discharge of duty, and the punishment due to transgression, can be but insufficient on earth. There is, then, a future life, where the dispensation is made.’

“‘The satisfaction which is experienced by the practice of virtue, and the joy which follows a discharge of duty, is a sufficient reward. The bitterness with which vice fills the soul, and the remorse which gnaws the transgressor of duty, is a sufficient punishment. There is, then, no future life, during which may be dispensed the reward and the punishment due to the discharge and violation of duty.’

“‘Fidelity to duty, because it honors God; viola-

* The believers of a natural religion.

† The opponents of public worship.

tion of it, because it offends him, clothe the character of infinity. Reward and punishment ought then to have an infinity, which the soul may be susceptible to suffer. Reward and punishment are then endless.'

"Young Greek, I would not finish this nomenclature, if I wished to expose to you, even succinctly, the divers theological faiths and morals which I remarked in that class of Christians who do not admit the gospel, and who, however, by I know not what incomprehensible folly, practise the ceremonies of Christianity, chiefly those instituted by the Romish priests. As I was studying these doctrines and myriads of others, my first thought was to believe that I was in error, and that I ought to rest easy in the arms of scepticism; but a secret voice whispered in me, that the star of Christianity was not false; that scepticism was a doctrine of death; that truth was not a chimera; and that even truths existed, the knowledge of which was of the highest importance to man, namely: *Does one God eternal exist? If he exists, are there connections from man to him? If there are, what are they? Has God established connections between man and his fellow-men? If he has established any, what are they?*

"I then asked myself, Where can I find the solution of these vital questions? Will it be in the word and the works of men, or in nature, submitted to the test of my reason? Then I commenced to inquire after it in the word and works of men. First, I put to myself this question: Is it in history?

"Behold two men who write the life of an individual, of a people, or of humanity. The one affirms, the other denies; the one praises, the other censures; the

one approves, the other condemns; the one avows, the other keeps silence; the one puts forth proofs, the other rejects them; the one conceals the sources whence he has drawn his documents, the other wishes us to believe his word without any further examination. What is, then, unhappily for truth, the compass of the historian? Integrity and good faith? No; most generally prejudice, whence flow his opinions, his political, social, or religious faith, his material interests, his ambitious views, the benefit of his religion or of his country.

“Are there not laudable exceptions? Yes, undoubtedly, a friend of humanity delights himself in believing there are. But how can we discriminate the tares from the wheat? How distinguish the conscientious man from the man who obeys an influence? The writer says to himself, ‘In attempting to write history, I accomplish a great and sacred duty, because it emanates from the vital principle of human fraternity. Humanity has a triple manifestation: *manifestation in the past, manifestation in the present, and manifestation in the future.* All individual acts form by their succession the great river of general acts, which rolls and confounds its water in the immense ocean of human activity. Channel of transmission, I ought not to hold captive the waters of truth and of facts; I ought to stand by and let them run as they are, whether clear or muddy. Mandatory of *present humanity* to enlighten *that of the future*, I ought not to put in its hands a dubious light; but as the mission of instruction is sublime, so also the task is great and the responsibility solemn. I then owe myself to truth.’ And

he writes. But scarcely has he traced a line when a painful reflection oppresses his soul ; his hand becomes cold, and the pen drops from his fingers. He says to himself, ' I write, but individuality triumphs ; egotism has the sway. All the evils which overflow humanity flow from egotistic power ; it bears in its flanks all the errors and all the crimes which I, faithfully echoing, shall transmit to posterity. I am like a broken instrument, the vibrating strings of which emit harsh sounds, stifling at their birth all the fruits of my researches and observations.' Then this man startles ; and the despot, who stares at him because he fears his talent and the revelation of shameful truths, at first menaces and scowls, then flatters and lulls him in these enervating prospects : ' You have senses ; I will give them delight. Fortune distinguishes ; you shall have gold. Honors aggrandize and elevate ; I offer you dignities. You are endowed with a high mind ; before you incense shall burn. Be a vassal of my deity, and I will make you a demigod.' Then the energy of that man melts before selfishness. From sublime he becomes vulgar ; from independent he becomes servile. He bends the knee to the infamous idol of a human god, sells his liberty to a tyrant, measures himself by him, moulds his ideas on his degraded thoughts, his conscience to crime ; he writes, and, instead of offering himself to humanity as a burnt offering on the altar of truth, immolates himself to egotism on the altar of falsehood.

" Where is the man whose integrity has not become feeble before corrupters ? Where is the genius among any people which has not been depressed under the

weight of absolute power? Still, that man and many others have existed; but how difficult it is to discriminate them in perusing history! At the time when France was overspread with immortal men, how many among them kept themselves honorable and repulsed servility? Would Bossuet have flattered, if a royal egotist had not harnessed to his chariot this royal talent? * Would he have opposed the pretensions of Rome, — which were unjust and absurd, it is true, — if an iron power had not weighed upon him? Two hands held the pen of Bossuet — his and that of Louis XIV. Fénélon, that privileged understanding, that Christian heart, that hero of virtue, that sensible and loving soul, declared he loved humanity. He produced, to advocate its interests, one of the literary masterpieces which honor the human mind. But that man who said, ‘*The nation is myself*,’ added, ‘The immaculate is myself, truth is myself, I am impeccable. God is omnipotent in the universe; I am omnipotent in France. Let every thing perish which converges not to me and sustains not my omnipotence.’ Then this Haman, intoxicated with pride because a Mordecai adored not his thoughts, but said, ‘Kings are created for the people,’ caused the gibbet of the exile to be reared for the friend of God and of men. Jealous Herod, he wished to stifle in his furious embraces the beautiful child of the soul of Fénélon. Believing it dead, he threw it into the pit of oblivion; and, fearing its resurrection, he placed guards around its tomb. But the moment of cold equality and silent fraternity

* Louis XIV., King of France.

came. He who believed himself great, a god on earth, died; and the shrouded reappeared in life. Still, Fénelon* sacrificed truth to his private interests; as proof, he entreated Bossuet, whilst exiled in La Tremblade, to reconcile him to Louis XIV.

“If, then, in that epoch of gigantic development of human intelligence, truth remained concealed under a bushel, was truth on the chandelier in that dark age in which the eye of the appreciator cannot read? — in that age when rare men only knew how to trace and reproduce their thoughts — when kings, legislators, and promulgators of doctrines made their own history or dictated it to their courtiers? How would important truths have shone forth since the fall of Rome, when tyrants, succeeding to power, killed the Christians, and wished to annihilate their doctrines? How would they have shone forth in Asia, when instruction was there proscribed by the laws; when the caliphs, in the name of those laws, burned the rich library of Alexandria, and all others within their reach? How would they have shone forth in Europe during the reign of feudalism — at the time when lords, marquises, viscounts, counts, dukes, kings, and emperors had in

* We read in the works of Maury, the celebrated orator of the French revolution of the last century, and in several histories, that Louis XIV. persecuted Fénelon on account of his book entitled “*Telemachus*,” that he exiled him from his court, forbade the editors to print his book, ordered the public officers to seize and burn all the copies of it. All thus disappeared; but, after the death of Louis XIV., a valet de chambre of Fénelon gave the printer a copy of the manuscript which he had concealed. Thus was preserved this valuable book, which has been translated into so many languages.

their hands the sceptre of tyranny, and destroyed, in all classes of society, intelligent men who wished to raise their voice against ignorance and tyranny? — at the time when the lords, etc., killed the poor people with swords hallowed by the bishops; when kings and emperors knelt before a pope, and, kissing his feet, obtained from him, in the name of God, permission to slay their subjects as the butchers slay lambs; at the time when the people, reduced to be *pariah*, adored all these *tiger gods* who devoured them, and bowed before the priests who imposed upon them such worship; at the time, especially, when the blood shed by the Papacy overflowed Europe, when its inquisitors burned both books and authors? Therefore I must come to the conclusion that I cannot find in history these original truths.

“Young Greek, I then said to myself, Where can I find them — in philosophical or religious systems? But logic is flexible and elastic; each philosopher bends and applies it to his opinions. Each religion produces facts and proofs. I have studied all systems; and not one explains to me even what my senses experience: how can they inform me about what I can reach only with the eyes and the hands of my intelligence?

“Where, then, find these truths, the knowledge of which is my most earnest longing? for I feel in myself a burning fire, an active flame, which consumes me. I know not the hand that has lighted this fire; but I feel that it devours me. Where, then, shall I find them? In the teaching of orators, wise and learned professors? It is true that the fascination of their

talents has surprised me, that the penetration of their minds has astonished me, that their genius has struck me with admiration. But all their opinions are divergent ; they have not settled my mind ; they, on the contrary, have obscured all the questions. What I would have denied I am inclined to affirm ; what I would have affirmed I am inclined to deny ; what was certainty with me is for me doubtful ; my mind is dark on all the most important questions.

“Where, then, find these truths? In the general reason of people? But that which is idolatry in Germany is lawful adoration in the States of the Church. What is superstition in England is the worship of Italy. What is holy and sacred in Rome is profane and despised in London. What is virtue in the countries of the north is a vice and a crime among the nations of the south. What is honorable in Constantinople is a dishonor in Paris. A stronger proof yet : if I cross a river, pass a mountain, or overleap the landmark which separates two empires, candor becomes falsehood, virtue vice, and error truth.

“Shall I, then, after being exhausted in vain efforts, despair of quenching my thirst for a knowledge of these important truths? No. Whether God exists or exists not, whether I am to live forever or only for a moment, I ought to be able to satisfy the imperious wants of my being. Study ought to afford bread to my soul, as labor procures it for my body. An internal voice whispers it to me ; a secret sentiment makes me aware of it.

“If I look upon myself, I find two beings — the one visible, the other invisible ; the one corporeal, which

assimilates me to animals, the other intellectual, which constitutes me the king of the material universe. The first is richly provided with all that is necessary for its preservation and growth; the other consequently possesses more eminently every thing which is required for its existence and development. But among these means of existence and development, the most inherent in its nature is reason; it is the compass which directs men on the ocean of truth, the torch which lights them, the eye that watches and informs them. If it misleads men, and conducts them in the obscurity of ignorance to the precipice of error, it is because they divest of its native energy this power of the soul, which is to its life what the eye is to the body. Is the eye clear and simple? — the body moves in light. Are the exterior agents more or less injurious to the organs constituting the eye? — the motion of the body is more or less obscure. Therefore, if the reason is preserved pure, the mind lives in light; whereas it exists more or less in darkness in proportion as it has received a culture more or less deleterious. Since, then, reason is the eye of the mind, if it has not been vitiated by a false culture, if, artless and upright, it remains free from all passions, if it has observed without determining, and studied the different systems without adopting them, it has then preserved its native purity. The mind which it instructs is in light; it can then boldly, without any fear, advance in its development and in the acquisition of truth.

“But my reason informs me that it is not in monuments and human institutions that I ought to seek the solution of these vital questions, because their de-

lineations are too dark and incomplete ; that it is **not** in the ideas of men, because ignorance and a bigoted faith causes them to be either systematic or as light as the wind, but in that which is stable and out of their reach in nature.

“I then open this great book, of which every artless and pure hand can break the seal, without being misled in its pages, without being lost in the labyrinth of systems, the inventors thereof wish to apply that which is to that which their imagination creates. I question it on myself and on beings existing around me ; it responds, that *there is one God eternal, and one alone ; that a conscious link between God and man exists, viz. : there is a tie of love generating duty ; that God has established connections between man and his fellow-men, viz. : the tie of love generating duty.*

“Young Greek, I concluded, then, that the gospel had not deceived me ; that it is only the echo of my reason when it says to man, —

“‘Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.’

CHAPTER XXXI.

VARIOUS CHRISTIAN CHURCHES. — ANECDOTE. —
ROMANISM.



THEN became a disciple of Christ. But among Christians who, like myself, believed the gospel, the greater number did not even admit the fundamental truths, though clearly expressed in this sacred code. They fabricated an infinite number of symbols, which are, the most of them, monstrous mixtures of the doctrines of Christ with the creations of their own fancies and passions.

"I will not attempt to speak to you, even briefly, of my inquiries about the doctrines of the divers sects, which have multiplied to infinity in Christendom; of Romanism — but I forgot that you, young Greek, are a Roman Catholic. Do you allow me to speak of it?"

"Certainly," replied Paul.

Isram continued: —

"I will not speak even briefly of my inquiries on Romanism — that denomination of Christians, or rather idolaters, which has given birth to, and perpetuated

among various people, discord and hatred ; which has armed and empowered tyrants against their subjects in the name of God ; which has choked in the heart the precious seed of the gospel ; spread ignorance, fanaticism, and superstition all over society ; caused rivers of blood to run ; and retarded, for so many ages, the improvement, instruction, and happiness of mankind. I will limit myself to telling you that three great churches appeared to me to stand triumphantly over the fragments of the many sects which figured, and figure still, in the arena of doctrines, wherein the struggles are so animated that they produce bloody conflicts. Some have fallen, and disappeared forever ; others are dying and agonizing ; others, however, sustain the combat.

“ One of these churches, that of the Protestants, (which, though including many churches, can be considered as an only church,) has been predominating for several ages in the northern kingdoms of Europe, and has ramified in divers countries of the west and south. It has grown powerful in America, and even in the islands beyond the seas.

“ Of the two other churches, one, that of the Greeks, extends its dominion over the religious and antique East ; the other, that of the Latins, reigns over the greater part of the west and south of Europe. It invades Asia, and the New World, and extends its branches all over the globe. It is the most powerful among the churches, though mostly absurd and injurious to society. The symbols of the last two churches are almost identical ; they, nevertheless, have been for about a thousand years disunited, and advancing separately. To bring before your eyes the dif-

ference I found between the symbols of these three churches, I will relate to you the following anecdote:—

“I embarked at London for Amsterdam. The sea being ruffled, and the winds contrary, navigation was retarded. To charm away the *ennui* of the voyage, the passengers gave themselves up to the pleasures of sport and feasting. I remarked among them a group of sober, grave, and learned men, who spent their time in reading or speaking of travels, literature, history, arts, and sciences. I listened to their conversation with the greatest interest. One day they made religious questions the topic of their conversation. At first, they made only general remarks on the bearing of religion on society; but soon after, they engaged in a dispute on this subject.

“The Protestant reproached the Roman Catholic with intolerance and exclusiveness; accused him of having a faith opposed to reason, and of disguising, in an absurd and enticing manner, the evangelical dogmas and morals. He congratulated the Greek Christian upon having broken off from Rome, and from the bishops of the West; upon having broken off the yoke of the Papacy, and taken immense countries from its ambition and tyranny. Yet he, at the same time, regretted that he had preserved in his creed the Catholic Judaism, and formed the desire of having his church regenerated in the baptism of reason, of the free interpretation of the Scriptures, and of the Holy Ghost.

“The Greek Christian anathematized the Papacy, and the church of the West; approved the Protestant in his desertion, but condemned his indifference for Oriental traditions, and for practices cemented for centuries in the Christian religion.

"The Roman Christian reproached the Protestant for the allowance that he had made of reason to the detriment of authority, and also for incoherency in his creed, as having given birth to a great number of sects. He charged the Greek Christian with pride, with inadequacy in his creed, and with his separation from the Romish church.

" 'What is, then, your creed ?' asked the Protestant and Greek Christian.

" 'I believe all that the pope teaches me through the bishops and the priests.'

" 'Would you believe all that the pope should fancy to impose upon you ?'

" 'Certainly.'

" 'If he obliged you to believe that you do not exist, should and could you believe it ?'

" 'Certainly.'

" 'We beg leave to say to you that you would not and could not believe it.'

" 'I assure you that I should, could, and would believe it ; for the pope is the vicar of Jesus Christ, consequently the lieutenant of God. Since I ought to believe the word of God, I ought to believe the word of the pope.'

"At this answer, the Protestant and the Greek Christian smiled with astonishment and pity. The Roman Catholic then rose, and with a loud, energetic, and imperious tone said to them, —

" 'You listen to my words with astonishment and contempt, exactly as the Jews did to the doctrine of Jesus Christ. You have hardened your ears and heart to Romanism ; but know, and keep in your mind, that

out of my church you are branches severed from the trunk of Christianity, thereby dead ; that you are before my eyes worse than the heathens and the publicans ; that you cannot be saved, and are destined to an eternal and certain reprobation ; that you are enemies of Jesus Christ, and anathematized by his church ; that you bear engraved on your foreheads this ineffaceable sentence and malediction — *Reprobates !*’

“ By politeness the Protestant and the Greek Christian did not reply ; still a satirical smile was delineated on their lips.

“ Though the following circumstances do not pertain to my subject, I relate them to complete the account of this anecdote.

“ A Jew who was witness of the dispute, then spoke and said, ‘ Christians, it is not astonishing that you have different creeds, because the Christian religion, being based on error, bears in its bosom division, and with it a germ of dissolution. My church alone possesses truth. My faith alone is the true one. Mankind was isolated in breaking the bond of union which existed between them and the Divinity. With generations and ages the primitive traditions had been effaced. Ignorance had given birth to error ; and error had engendered the desertion of all original truths, even that of the unity of God and his spirituality. All organization of matter which surprised, flattered, or frightened, had been called God. Then God said to himself, “ A nation shall be great and privileged among other nations. It shall bear in its hands the torch of truth, which shall give light to the present generations, and those of the future.” This was the Jewish

nation. A man raised up among the people, he dictated to them the most sublime and most perfect political, social, and religious legislation that has ever appeared. God constituted him his prophet, and the forerunner of the Messiah, who is not yet come. He will appear only in a future age for the salvation and glory of Israel. This man was Moses.'

" 'O Jew,' replied the Christians, 'Moses was, it is true, a great prophet. God revealed to him your religion; but it is incomplete and full of imperfections. In the sight of the Most High it was only symbolic, only figurative, only preparatory to the religion of Him who is truly the Messiah, and whose law is the fulfilment of that of Moses.'

" 'Christians,' spoke a sceptic, 'believe me, you deceive yourselves. Christ was not the Messiah; he was only a philosopher, a profound legislator, a great man if you will, but nothing else. Your people, O Jew, are an absurd people. Your Moses was only an illustrious impostor. United secretly to the Egyptian priesthood, he stripped it of all that was true in its doctrine. More artful than the magicians, he confounded them with a mean worship. Brought up in the court of Pharaoh, from the low he wished to become the great; from the subject he wished to become the ruler; from the oppressed to be the tyrant. His tribe being in servitude, he said to them, "You are slaves; follow me: God has revealed to me that you shall be free. You are poor; follow me: God has revealed to me that you shall be rich."

" 'By his imposture he made an ignorant and superstitious king turn pale upon his throne. All Egypt

wept, so deeply had he thrown her into misery. He watered with blood all the sand of this vast country. Israelites, whose science was limited to the fabrication of brick, trembled before him with admiration and with stupor. They followed him; and this cruel and ambitious man, before giving them a country, before changing their tents for dwellings, pretended to divine intervention, and led them for forty years in a wilderness of a few months' travel. There he opened graves for millions of men. Thousands fell by his sword, because nakedness, famine, and thirst drew complaints from them, or because they forgot for a moment his doctrine, pretended to be descended from heaven. There he, pretending again to divine revelation, traced puerile statutes, published oppressive laws, and imposed a worship, whose despotism is mostly barbarous, ignorant, and absurd.'

"The Jew and the Christians exclaimed indignantly, —

"'Your language, O philosopher, is a tissue of error, bad will, and calumny. The hatred and animosity which overflow your heart blacken your lips.'

"At these words their spirits became heated; they began to contend harshly; and a quarrel ensued. Fortunately their friends intervened, and prayed them to put an end to the dispute.

"Unable yet to discern which was the true church, I continued to observe and to inform myself. When I had travelled over and studied almost the whole of Europe, I set out for Rome to visit that so celebrated bulwark of Catholicism. In seeing this ancient capital of the universe, this *rendezvous* of all monuments and

souvenirs, where rest the ashes of martyrs and those of their executioners, where repose in glory the remains of the first apostles, and in opprobrium those of their tyrants, I was deeply moved. I there devoted some time in questioning my memory, gathering my observations, pondering the history of past ages, analyzing the present, and raising the veil of futurity, in order to throw light upon the different doctrines, and to fix firmly my religious faith. I studied particularly Romanism. I not only did not find in that church the primitive Christian purity, but I shrieked with horror at seeing the corruption of its members; at seeing the indescribable turpitude and infamy of its priests, monks, bishops, cardinals, etc.; especially at seeing the impiety, immorality, selfishness, intolerance, and tyranny of the pope, or rather of that heathen pontiff, who is a sacred hypocrite and tyrant, the very Anti-christ of Revelation!

CHAPTER XXXII.

RETURN OF ISRAM TO CONSTANTINOPLE. — END OF THE RELATION OF ISRAM. — HIS CONVERSATION WITH HIS FATHER ON CHRISTIANITY, MAHOMETANISM, ROMANISM, AND CHRISTIAN FRATERNITY.



AUL, my father, who desired my return after so long an absence, welcomed me home with so much the more eagerness and joy, because he thought that henceforth I should be the glory and consolation of his old age. He presented me to the emperor, who promised my father to promote me to high offices and dignities ; but offices and dignities had no attraction for me. Intending to become an apostle of fraternity among men, I could not contribute by my services to strengthen a tyrant on his throne ; I could not determine to be myself the tyrant of my brethren.

“ My father, who took notice of my indifference to such a bright prospect, could not penetrate the cause of it. He then closely observed my conversations, and watched my movements. One day he opened his heart, and said to me, —

“ ‘My son, since your return to the paternal roof, you are thoughtful and melancholy. Why are you so?’

“ ‘My father, you are mistaken. I am not sad.’

“ ‘You do not confess it. But tell me, why are you not happy?’

“ ‘My father, I am happy, particularly to see you again.’

“ ‘Your response gives me joy. The gratitude of a son is so sweet to the heart of a father! Why then are you given to painful reflections?’

“ ‘They are not painful; they are only serious.’

“ ‘They are only serious? But is not your future prospect brilliant and secure? Will you not fill important offices, and furnish a career of honor? Will you not be promoted to one of the highest social stations of the empire?’

“ ‘Those things do not trouble my mind.’

“ ‘Is it the fear of wanting wealth? But you will be rich.’

“ ‘It is not the object of my desires.’

“ ‘Do you doubt of obtaining honors? But you will be one of the great of the empire; you are already one of the favorites of the emperor.’

“ ‘My father, I have not the least doubt about it, but I am far from thirsting after honors.’

“ ‘My son, I am astonished at your language. Do you forget that I am one of the great of the empire, and that you ought to inherit the fame of your father? What suspicions you awake in my mind!’

“ ‘Be sure, my father, that your son will never crimson your cheeks with shame. He will be always worthy of you.’

“ ‘ Tell me why the name of Mahomet is so rarely on your lips.’

“ ‘ Because I rarely have occasion to speak of the prophet.’

“ ‘ You sometimes go to the Mosque of St. Sophia, but it is only to bury yourself in its library. I do not see you at the ceremonies, and you never assist in the assembly of believers. Explain this to me.’

“ ‘ I pray in secret.’

“ ‘ You have frequent interviews with the Christians?’

“ ‘ Yes, for my instruction.’

“ ‘ On what subject? On the Christian religion?’

“ ‘ I already have religious convictions.’

“ ‘ Are they not those of your father?’

“ ‘ My religious convictions are the love of God and of my fellow-men.’

“ ‘ And of Mahomet and the Koran?’

“ ‘ No, my father.’

“ ‘ Why so?’

“ ‘ Mahomet — permit me to say so — has not loved his fellow-men. His Koran is not a code of legislation which can realize the happiness of mankind.’

“ ‘ You are then no longer a disciple of the great prophet?’

“ ‘ Pardon me, my father. My answer will afflict you; but I owe myself to truth and to my conscience — I am one no longer.’

“ Young Greek, when I pronounced these words, my father turned pale, and fixed his eyes upon the ground, appeared deeply grieved, and kept a long silence. He then, raising his eyes to heaven, exclaimed, ‘ Unfortu-

nate father! I have sent my son into distant countries; he left me believer, and he returns to me an apostate!' and turning to me he said, —

“ ‘ Unfortunate son, you have then abjured your religion? ’

“ ‘ Yes, my father.’

“ ‘ Which one is yours at present? ’

“ ‘ I am a Christian.’

“ ‘ Why are you now a Christian? ’

“ ‘ Because Jesus Christ has taught men, by his word and his example, a doctrine which harmonizes with my reason in all points, and which is summed up in two precepts: *Love God and man*. No philosopher or prophet has ever taught any thing more simple, more sublime, and yet more analogous to the wants of man, considered either as an individual or as a member of society. During the short visit Christ made on earth, each of his steps was marked by an heroic act of self-denial, of love to God and to men. His life was the faithful echo of his teaching; and we can say of him, *He lived and died as a God*.’

“ ‘ My son, Mahomet has been the greatest among prophets.’

“ ‘ My father, I do not believe it.’

“ ‘ My son, Moses and Jesus prophesied, it is true. One performed prodigies, gave to the Hebrews laws and a country, and also proclaimed truths to them; but his legislation was not even the sketch of that of a great people. He made them conquer only a limited country. His doctrine was narrow and in swaddling clothes, as his people were petty and in the cradle of civilization. Jesus came afterwards; he wrought mir-

acles, and brought a more profound legislation. His doctrine was more elevated; but the truths which he taught are obscure and incomprehensible. Behold the division that you doubtless have remarked among his disciples. God then raised up Mahomet, who was greater than they. He called him into the wilderness, and taught him the celestial truths written in the Koran; then said to him, "Be my apostle."

" 'Mahomet descended from the mountains, laid the foundations of a vast empire, organized millions of men, and conquered one half of the world by his word, his doctrine, and his sword. He was even powerful enough to disdain the weapon of the miracle workers.'

" 'My father, if I am permitted, I will tell you my opinion about Mahomet.'

" 'Speak.'

" 'He was an ignorant, though celebrated and ambitious man; an infamous impostor, and a sanguinary despot. He wished to give fetters to consciences, to become great in his tribe, to be their tyrant, and through them to rule the universe. Each year during fifteen years he shut himself up for a month in a cavern of Mount Hera, and cultivating the love of the marvellous, which flatters all men, attracts and fascinates the vulgar, he then came out and presented himself, saying, —

" ' "The angel Gabriel has appeared to me, and God has spoken to me through him. He has dictated to me the Koran, and favored me with many pages of it, written in golden letters. 'I commission thee,' he has said to me; 'be my prophet. Go to the tribe. Present to them this book; it contains my wishes. my judgments, my promises, and my threats. If they de-

lieve not, tell them that I have commissioned thee to use the sword and the flame. If they believe, order them to follow thee, and go among infidel nations. Present to them also the Koran. If they demand of thee who has sent thee, respond, *Believe or die.*” A portion of the people only believed, and the remainder of the tribe spurned at his word. He then took the cimeter. Dead bodies fell around him as numerous as the blades of grass mowed down in the fields by the scythe. He saturated the sand of the desert with blood, and pillaged flourishing cities, leaving not one stone upon another. He spread through immense countries desolation, pillage, fire, and death.’

“ ‘God directed him to do so.’

“ ‘How could God have directed him to do so — he who holds crime in horror? He had never spoken to him. In proof of it, he was not able to prove his pretended divine mission. When the people saw the heap of dead bodies and of smoking ruins, and the flocks of men, women, and children led in bondage, they were terrified, and exclaimed, “We believe.” Thus Mahomet implanted his faith.

“ ‘He then arrayed himself as a pontiff, and with sacrilegious thoughts and impure intentions, with the heart of a tiger and the hands of a fratricide, he made to the Author of life offerings of death; he caused to rise to the Father of mankind the smoking blood of his children; washed his temple in it, and let drop his assassinating sword even on the altar that he had crimsoned.

“ ‘He took with one hand a sceptre that God had not given him, and, with the other brandishing his

cimeter, he advanced at the head of the tribe, presiding over the trembling and the dead. In his presence the people prostrated themselves, and bent their heads in the dust — believed and adored. He murdered all who did not accept his doctrine; advanced through nations, never laying aside the sword; and he ceased to strike and to plunge the weapon in the breast of those he called infidels only when his arm, exhausted, could handle no longer his fratricidal sword. He appropriated to himself the spoils of his victims; became the richest of the descendants of Ishmael; had many wives; forced his most zealous defenders and his most faithful believers to yield him their wives when he loved them. He pushed his brutal passions so far as to marry a virgin eight years of age.’

“My father interrupted me by saying, —

“‘Mahomet was a saint, the elect of the elect, the favored of the Most High. His words and his actions were inspired by God.’

“I continued: ‘He had, it is true, natural talents; but he made them serve his ignorance, his hypocrisy, his vengeance, his perfidy, his lust, his pride, his ambition; in a word, his selfishness. When, extended on the bed of agony, he saw that the prolongation of his life was hopeless, and yet that much blood remained to be spilled, he said to those around him, “Fight against the infidels, until all false religion is exterminated. Put them to the sword; spare them not; and, when you have enfeebled them by a relentless carnage, reduce the rest to slavery, and oppress them with tributes.”’*

* Koran, ch. viii. ver. 12, 13; ix. ver. 30; xlvii. ver. 4.

“ ‘He died, and left to mankind, as a heritage, the Koran — this pretended code of the divine word, wherein all crimes have their apotheosis; wherein vices are deified, but truth and virtue have scarcely a room; wherein ignorance, annihilation of reason, tyranny, debasement of woman, and degradation of human nature are commanded, consecrated, and sanctioned, on pain of death.’

“ ‘What an exaggeration! The Koran contains the truth.’

“ ‘My father, I cannot believe that the truth is contained in the Koran. It is only in the gospel. The caliphs, worthy successors of Mahomet, remained among the believers as continuators of the pretended mission of Mahomet, as heirs of his wealth and of his power. They have nourished, through their imans, for many centuries, generations of more than sixty millions of men, with the bread of ignorance, corruption, superstition, and fanaticism. Of them they made beasts of burden. I repeat it, they assimilated them to their flocks, and disposed of their bodies and souls as if they had been their own property. Even more recently, the sultans have become their imitators and their brothers. Every day we witness their tyranny and cruelty.’

“ Paul, when I spoke so, the gestures of my father were impatient; his glance inflamed; his visage expressed wrath. He could not restrain himself from interrupting me.

“ ‘My son,’ said he, ‘your language is strange; it irritates me. You calumniate Mahomet, and blaspheme his creed. If he has spilled blood, and violated

the laws of the Koran, it was by the direction of God. It is not he who instituted tyranny, but God himself. In proof of it, there have been always tyrants and oppressed. If you consider these facts and these institutions as misfortunes, know that, in the view of the Creator, some evils are inevitable and profitable in society.'

" 'My father,' I replied, 'can I answer you without exciting your anger?'

" 'Speak ; open to me freely your thoughts and sentiments ; for in spite of my sorrow and displeasure, I still am your father.'

" 'My father, a faith may not be imposed by the sword, and God cannot authorize a committal of crime ; this is the voice of reason. Mahomet has been, then, only a sanguinary impostor, a wicked wretch. As to tyranny, God is not its author, and it is not an inevitable and profitable evil in society.

" 'In the beginning, all men had God for a Father, and for a patrimony the universe : together they had to live on the earth as the children of the same family. But selfish men denied their brothers, and constituted themselves their tyrants. How many times has God pronounced his maledictions against them ! how many deliverers of humanity has he called out ! Is it not he who commissioned Moses to deliver Israel from the yoke of Pharaoh ? who preceded by his luminous cloud a great nation going into the wilderness to obtain liberty ? Is it not he who sent Jesus Christ on earth to announce to men that he opened heaven to them ? that all are brothers, and ought to love one another ? And these tyrants, because the people marvelled at his doc-

trine, and his works, and wished to call him *the Son of God* ; because he was the son of an artisan ; because he opened to mankind the road of deliverance in preaching to the oppressors that the oppressed were their brothers, — these tyrants, I say, made him their victim, called him a madman, whipped him, crowned him with thorns, spat upon him, nailed him to the gibbet of malefactors, and thereon killed him. Afterwards they slew his disciples ; and did not admit him in their Pantheon until they discovered that the faith of the people in his mission could serve their interests.

“ ‘ Therefore, God is not the author of tyranny, and it is not an inevitable and profitable evil in society. It was established only by the most selfish among men, and Mahomet has consecrated it. He has gone so far as to debase woman by polygamy.’ ”

“ ‘ What say you, my son ? ’ responded my father. ‘ Mahomet has debased woman by polygamy ! Is it not the will of God that woman be the property of man ? ’ ”

“ ‘ No, my father,’ I replied, ‘ God has not created her to be his property, but his companion. To love each other is inherent in the heart of man and woman ; but love is exclusive. A man who has several wives, and a woman who has several husbands, violates this law of nature, falls into a disorder of the senses, a negation of love, and a degradation of the heart. ”

“ ‘ God has made woman the blood of the blood of man, the flesh of his flesh, the bone of his bone, the mind of his mind, the heart of his heart, and the life of his life. Separate these two existences and both wither, because the parts would no longer form a whole ; there would be no more unity in the plurality ; ”

not that I condemn celibacy, for Christ remained virgin, and said to his disciples, "He that is able to receive it, let him receive it."

" 'The body of man is strong, solid, vigorous, robust; that of woman is frail, graceful, slender, delicate. The character of man is violent, energetic, rude, cold, inflexible; that of woman is mild, pliant, soft, ardent, malleable. The mind of man is strong, extended, profound, penetrating; that of woman is supple, vivacious, subtle, varied. The heart of man is silent, austere, noble, magnanimous; that of woman is affable, compassionate, sensitive, heroic.'

" 'My son, this is not the nature of woman.'

" 'My father, you are right. It is not the nature of woman in the Ottoman empire, because Mahomet, the calphs, and the sultans have annihilated her native faculties; because they have fashioned her with the Koran.'

"I continued: 'Man builds habitations; woman charms his abode. He founds cities; she polishes them. Sociability is inherent in the nature of man; woman embellishes society, and gives it mild laws. Man is the head of the family; woman is its body. Man begets children; woman gives them light. In the heats of summer, or the chilly blasts of winter, man is exhausted by hard labor; woman provides for his wants. When, at night, he returns to the fireside, fatigued and down-hearted, she revives his stiffened limbs, and cheers him with her smile, with her soothing and consoling words. Man conceives great designs, executes gigantic undertakings; woman inspires him with courage. Man is gladdened and strengthened

against misfortunes; woman increases his joy a hundred fold, and adorns his triumph. Man reels under adversity; woman sustains him. Man is the oak; woman is the ivy; if the ivy creeps upon the earth, it droops, dies, and leaves to the oak but an isolated, poor, and languishing life; whereas, if the ivy interlaces the oak with its folds, they both have but one life, which is bright, happy, vigorous, and secular; the oak protects it; and if a storm approaches to tear them asunder, it embraces more closely its trunk, and dies only when it dies: this is the image of the life and death of man and woman.

“ ‘Woman is not only the complement of man, but she even possesses, in an eminent degree, qualities which have been but imperfectly imparted to him. To what an extent is she not excited by her love for her husband! Does she calculate her sacrifices? Does she ask herself the degree of her attachment? Does she return to measure the steps she has taken? Does she look at her feet, if, at each step, thorns have sprinkled them with blood? My father, follow her, if you can, in her maternal love. Find, if you can, the thread which leads into the labyrinths of her heart.

“ ‘For nine months she bears her child in her womb; gives it birth in cruel pains; wastes her youth, her strength, and her health around its cradle; transforms her life into its life; and when it dies, she would die too if some invisible tie did not detain her on earth — it is to love and suffer more.

“ ‘How sublime is her filial love! We find therein both the mysterious and the sublime. She knows how to charm the old age of her father, and make him for-

get his infirmities. Should she be compelled to mount the scaffold, the day of her execution would be to her a day of supreme happiness.

“ ‘Let us follow her the night after a battle. When the roar of the cannon is dying away in the bottom of the plain, when the frightened sun has withdrawn his light, and the shroud of darkness conceals so much horror, she then directs her steps, torch in hand, to the field of battle, advances in the midst of the blood, which runs and crimsones her shoes, across limbs torn asunder, shattered arms, and mutilated corpses, resembling the spirit of humanity who comes to shed tears over this frightful massacre. Has a plaintive cry struck her ear? She approaches the exhausted soldier, wipes the dust from his visage, cleanses his wounds, stanches the trickling blood, covers him with apparel, and, having exhausted all the cares which tenderness suggests to her, she by soft words calls his heart to sentiment and gives him courage.

“ ‘Let us behold her at the bed of an agonized being, who has no other claim upon her affection and attachment than that which forlornness and misfortune inspire. During his sickness she has purified his ulcers, and consecrated her vigils to softening his pains; and when he expires, she weeps over his dead body, believing herself in widowhood because she can no longer lavish on this unfortunate creature the love and repulsive cares which the generosity of her soul rendered delightful to her.

“ ‘Woman is a mystery. Her existence here below is but a long and incessant martyrdom, which she endures for man. However, she complains not of this

martyrdom, for her heart loves; and where there is love, suffering is transformed into pleasure.'

" 'My son,' replied my father, 'your language is pitiful. You had a beautiful dream; all that you say of woman is imaginative.'

" 'My father, I have seen woman formed by the gospel. I have studied her among the Christians. She is the soul of society; she gives life to it. It is she who drops the consoling penny in the hand of poverty; it is from her lips that words fall which soften the lot of the unfortunate. She brings together the great and the low, the rich and the poor. She ties the bonds of society; it is through her that almost all good is effected.

" 'And this creature, so inseparable from man, so beautiful, so loving, so generous, so celestial, and so adorable, — should she be the property of man, and not his companion? O, no!'

Paul interrupted Isram, asking eagerly, —

" Did not the remarkable doctrine of the gospel on the rehabilitation of woman somewhat excite the admiration of your father? "

" Not at all, young Greek. He remained cold and inflexible. His features expressed only a feeling of pity for my blindness. Alas! prejudice and error implant themselves and take root in the heart as the tares in the fields; they afterwards develop themselves, and leave no room for truth and sentiment. However, he had listened to me without irritation. He then said to me, —

" 'My son, if I have listened to you without imposing silence on your blasphemy against Mahomet, your

impieties against the religion of your fathers, and the exposition of your new and deplorable doctrines, it is that I excuse your youth, deplore your errors, and mourn over your incredible blindness. As to the realization of fraternity among men, it is an absurd dream.'

" 'My father, pardon me; you are mistaken. Jesus Christ has said, "The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a spirit; and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth;" which worship Christ explains in the following words: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment; and the second is like unto it: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." And, my father, if you observe the actual social phenomena, and compare them with the past, you will draw the conclusion that the time is come wherein the Christian fraternity is to reign among men.'

" 'Listen to me, my son, and you will be convinced that the fraternity spoken of in the gospel is impossible, not only among men, but even among Christians. Are not the prelates of the Romish church — that gigantic denomination of Christians — as intolerant and egotistic as were our caliphs? Are not their thoughts, words, and deeds the derision of the life and teaching of their Master? He, Christ, was born the poorest among the children of the people; and these prel-

ates are born the richest among the children of the proud.

“ Christ was a poor mechanic ; for thirty years the hammer and chisel hardened his hands ; and these prelates oppress the mechanics ; their hands are virgins of work ; they have but a look of contempt for the man of labor, and hold that idleness and ignorance are a title to greatness.

“ Christ dressed himself like the other children of the people, lost himself in their ranks ; and these prelates, his pretended apostles, wear, to rank above the people, rich and floating tunics ; if sometimes they appear in the crowd, it is but to attract gazers, to beg admiration, or rather to solicit adorations. Adorned with their luxuriant garments, surrounded by a crowd of attendants, — who are in their meanness proud to wear their liveries and to be their slaves, — and escorted by a double rank of guards of honor, they isolate themselves from the people, compel them to stay at a distance, and bid officers to order them to kneel when they are passing among them.

“ Christ had not where to lay his head, thus fraternizing with the poor ; and these prelates dwell in palaces, wherein, near a splendid chapel, they have a sanctuary of voluptuousness, where, for money, they change a profane into a sacred thing, vice into virtue, sin into laudable deeds, and open hell or heaven, — where they forge-irons to fetter the too credulous faithful, who believe them to be gods, — where they have soldiers to protect their sleep and guard their heaps of money, salaries from the sweat of the people, which they have stolen by working on their ignorance and

superstition, thus fraternizing with the enemies of Christ, of whom he has said, "Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and their great ones exercise authority upon them; but so shall it not be among you; but whosoever will be great among you shall be your minister." The prelates not only imitate the rulers of the Gentiles, but go farther: they hold two sceptres, to impose upon the people a heavier tyranny — the one in their palaces, and the other in the churches as lieutenants of God.

"Christ said, "No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other . . . Ye cannot serve God and mammon." "Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses, nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves." "Take, therefore, no thought for the morrow." And these prelates love silver and gold, luxury and vanity; they heap immense riches and hoard incalculable treasures. To make money they sell the gospel, even the sacraments. Could they sell God, they would do so.

"Christ loved the poor, modest, and forsaken people; and these prelates are fond of none but the great, the proud, and happy men of the world.

"Christ was satisfied with the necessaries of life, and partook with the needy of the morsel of bread that he had softened and sanctified with his blessings and tears; and these prelates, in their sensuality, load their tables with the most exquisite meals, and often sit at the tables of the rich.

"Christ refused to be a king, for a bearer of scept-

tres cannot be the brother of his subjects ; and these prelates have usurped the royalty. One of them went so far in his mockery of Christ as to wear even a golden crown, which Christ would have thrown in the mud, because it would have stained his brow, fit only to be shaded with a thorny crown. These great men of Christianity have divided the portion of the earth that they have conquered into myriads of kingdoms, to overrule them according to their caprice.

“ Christ chose his apostles among obscure and simple men, whose consciences were right and pure ; and these prelates recruit themselves among the potent and illustrious, or, if in the low classes, among despicable men, whose souls have been polluted by ambition, whose hearts are dead to the love of their fellow-beings.

“ Christ fraternized with his apostles and disciples. He lived among them as if he had been the least of them. He was humble and loving so far as to wash their feet ; and these prelates appear before men like divinities. They mock the humility of Christ in washing, on Holy Thursday, the feet of the handsomest children of the richest and most influential lords.

“ Christ said, “ Whosoever of you will be the chiefest shall be the servant of all ; ” and these prelates are oppressors and tyrants of the priests, to whom they have conceded a small royalty, that they be among the people the spies of their policy, the apostles of their sovereignty, and the pillars of their thrones. However, they do not hold such commission from Christ ; but woe to them if they obey the Lord rather than those who ought to represent him ! ”

“ ‘And you, my son, charge our caliphs and sultans with ambition, fanaticism, and tyranny? And you hope that fraternity will be realized on earth? How could it be possible, since the great of Christianity are a living derision of the gospel, and of the life of Jesus Christ?’ ”

“ ‘My father,’ I answered, ‘what you say is unfortunately too true. The history of the princes of the Romish church is rather scandalous than edifying. They have too often forgot the maxims of their Master.’ ”

“ ‘Say, rather,’ replied my father, ‘that the great of Romanism have not been, and still are not, the disciples and successors of Jesus Christ, but those of the scribes and pharisees who persecuted him. Should he come again on earth, he would charge them as he once charged the scribes and pharisees. He said, —

“ ‘ “The scribes and the pharisees sit in Moses’ seat; all therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works; for they say, and do not.” ’ ”

“ ‘My son, the scribes and pharisees of Christianity sit in Moses’ seat. Do they observe and do whatsoever they bid you observe? Are not history and society filled with their scandals, enormities, and immorality of every kind? Far from marrying, or keeping themselves chaste in celibacy, do they not disturb families in seducing unmarried and married women? Do they not mount the steps of the pulpit, covered with gold, silver, silk, and embroideries; thus mocking the people, and teaching them that poverty is the road which will lead them to heaven, whilst those poor

people have exhausted themselves and starved their families to enrich them?

“ ‘Jesus Christ added, “They [the scribes and the pharisees] bind heavy burdens, and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men’s shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers.”

“ ‘Are not the scribes and pharisees of Christianity as cowardly, hypocritical, selfish, and tyrannical as were their forefathers?

“ ‘Jesus Christ added, “All their works [of the scribes and pharisees] they do to be seen of men; they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments.”

“ ‘Are not the scribes and pharisees of Christianity more vain and haughty than their ancestors? They have thrones; sound a trumpet before them when, by ostentation and hypocrisy, they take from their treasures a piece of money, to give it with haughtiness to the poor — mocking the maxim of Christ, “When thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth.” They have always on their lips the letter of a law, that is engraved neither in their minds nor in their hearts. The borders of their garments are silk, silver, and gold.

“ ‘Christ added, the scribes and the pharisees “love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets, and to be called of men *rabbi*, *rabbi*.”

“ ‘The scribes and the pharisees of Christianity bid the people not only to kneel and prostrate themselves before them, but compel them to style them, not *rabbi*, —

it would be too little honor, but — “ *Our Lords.*” They have armor seals, and counterseals, grand vicars, secretaries, chaplains, canons, a multitude of satellites, which they choose among their most assiduous courtiers, and their most slavish valets in the priesthood.

“ ‘ Christ added, “ But be not ye [my disciples] called rabbi, for one is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren.”

“ ‘ Since the scribes and the pharisees of Christianity insult Jesus Christ so far as to compel the people to style them “ *Our Lords,*” they are enemies of their brethren, and apostates of the gospel, of apostleship, and of the religion of Christ.

“ ‘ Christ added, [My disciples,] “ call no man your father upon the earth, for one is your Father, which is in heaven.”

“ ‘ They, the scribes and the pharisees of Christianity, claim from the people the title of their “ *Spiritual Fathers*” on earth. And at what do they aim? To solidify and perpetuate, with their pretended and hypocritical paternity, the despotism they have imposed upon them.

“ ‘ Christ added, “ But woe unto you, scribes and pharisees, hypocrites! for you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.”

“ ‘ Have not the scribes and pharisees of Christianity, to serve their passions, and especially their avarice, overloaded with human institutions the religion of Christ? Have not they entangled it with childish observances, fastidious practices, absurd beliefs, and prescriptions contrary to reason and to the law of

nature? Do they not establish laws directly opposed to the doctrine of Christ? Do they not say to Christians, You shall not eat meat on Friday, on Saturday, on the eve of certain feasts, during all the Lent, etc. You shall not eat on certain days designated by us, though you will feel hungry; if you transgress our prescriptions, you will sin mortally, and hell will be your portion; thus deriding Christ's doctrine, "Whatsoever thing from without entereth into the man, it cannot defile him; because it entereth not into his heart, but into the belly, and goeth out into the draught, purging all meats?" But what say I? Give them gold, and you may transgress their prescriptions without sin, and without going to hell. To their eyes gold is the key of heaven.

"Christ added, "Woe unto you, scribes and pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayers; therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation."

"Are not the scribes and pharisees of Christianity doing so every day in imposing upon poor and defenceless widows the most onerous exactions, especially masses, dearly paid, for the pretended relief of the souls of their husbands, detained, they say, in purgatory?"

"Christ added, "Woe unto you, scribes and pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him two-fold more the child of hell than yourselves."

"My son, are not the scribes and pharisees of Christianity restless in their efforts both to enlarge their domains, and increase their proselytes, — but I

should rather say their victims, — and to spread all over the world, I do not say the teaching of Christ, but his gospel changed into a philosopher's stone, to make money and satiate their selfishness? Do they not communicate to their proselytes the corruption of their hearts? Look at the countries which they overrule; all, without one exception, are a sink of immorality.' ”

Whilst Isram repeated before Paul the utterance of his father, the young monk turned pale; his features expressed astonishment, stupor, and consternation. He could not hear without trembling that which he thought to be blasphemous and impious; for in his belief, the priests, especially the prelates of the Romish church, were the successors of Jesus Christ himself; therefore, should they be the most criminal among men, they are not liable before society. Notwithstanding, the old man, who was absorbed in his recollections, did not notice it, and continued the speech of his father.

“ ‘Woe unto you, scribes and pharisees, hypocrites! ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel.

“ ‘My son, do not the scribes and pharisees of Christianity deem sinful the omission of an insignificant practice, of a foolish ceremony, and violate, remorseless, the precept of fraternal love? What do I say? Is it not in their belief a virtuous and glorious deed? Do they not sow among nations, families, and all classes of society, discord and hatred? And by what means? By their intolerance, espionage, denunciation, detractions, slanders, and, above all, by their immorality and sensuality.

“ ‘Christ added, “Woe unto you, scribes and phari-

sees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. Thou blind pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also. Woe unto you, scribes and pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whitened sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity."

" 'My son, are not these words of Jesus Christ the true picture, or rather mirror, of the conscience of the scribes and pharisees of Christianity? Have I spoken truth?'

" 'My father,' I answered, 'you have unfortunately spoken but the truth. It seems that the picture which Jesus Christ traced of the perversity of the scribes and the pharisees of his age was but the prophecy of the perversity of the princes of Romanism. The maledictions that fell heavy upon them from the mouth of Jesus Christ fall again with all their weight upon those men, the prelates, who, accepting the inheritance of the scribes and of the pharisees, — monstrous and impious inheritance of hypocrisy, selfishness, and tyranny, — became thereby their true sons. For many centuries they have fettered human liberty. They have always stopped, and still stop, so far as it is in their power, the progress of science, the flight of genius, the improvement of the human mind, and the social emancipation. They always forbade men thinking, believing, feeling, willing, and acting for themselves; and such prohibition they imposed upon them under pain of

mortal sin and hell. They at all times kept the people down in ignorance, superstition, and brutishness.

“ ‘Every one who durst escape or affront their despotism, who undertook to enlighten the people on their sacrilegious perversion of the gospel, became their victim. They immolated him in full day; because potent enough to compel kings and emperors to borrow from them the sceptre, they bore both the crosier and the sword. They were then allowed to be vultures; but now, their wings being clipped, they are but owls. They still have sharp nails, with which they, in the dark, tear into pieces and devour the reputation of the conscientious men, who disapprove of and protest against their crimes, their anti-natural and anti-Christian teaching.

“ ‘Jesus Christ said, “Woe unto you, scribes and pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous, and say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets. Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers. Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?”

“ ‘This is verily the duplicity of the great of the Romish Catholic church. We see them every day shedding fallacious and artful tears on the victims of truth whom their forefathers have immolated. This is too their divine and irrevocable sentence. Being as perfidious, poisonous, and deadly as vipers, the damnation of hell is their just punishment.

“ ‘ Christ said, “ Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes : and some of them ye shall kill and crucify ; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city.”

“ ‘ This is the most striking picture of the Inquisition, which institution has been the most horrible among the most horrible calamities that have desolated mankind. It has been affixed to the wombs of nations as a devouring fire. It wasted them so that they were perishing and dying. In Spain alone, in three hundred and thirty-nine years, *thirty-four thousand six hundred and fifty-eight* conscientious men were burned alive in the solemn auto-da-fé. *Eighteen thousand and forty-nine* were burned in effigy. *Two hundred eighty-eight thousand two hundred and fourteen* were condemned to galleys or to a perpetual prison. More than *two hundred thousand*, who were prisoners, and sentenced to bear the san benito, were condemned to an endless dishonor, themselves and their descendants. *Five millions* of citizens expatriated themselves to escape the cruelty of the holy office. Spain, that beautiful country, which counted, while inhabited by the Moors, *thirty-five millions* of people, was reduced to *ten millions*.

“ ‘ In the greatest part of the Catholic countries, the princes of the church compelled the Christians to build dungeons for themselves with their own hands ; to put up the woodpiles that were to be their death bed ; to make the wheels and other instruments that were to torture them ; to sharpen the poniards and the swords that were to immolate them. During four cen-

turies, day and night, Europe saddened the heavens with its knells of death, its long cries of distress and agony. If now those princes of the Romish church cannot feed their eyes with the blood of those whom they call their enemies, they soften that long fast in launching against them the steel of hatred and detraction, to give them social death.

“‘Christ said too, “Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.”

“‘For many centuries Jesus Christ repeats these complaints, threats, and prophecies by the mouth of his true disciples, who, because they are opposed to the corruption of those who say, “We are commissioned, and we alone, to preach the gospel,” are considered as being the deadliest foes of Christianity. “Are you not aware,” said and still say the true disciples of Christ to the princes of Romanism — “are you not aware that the people see your hideous nudity? that they have run the scalpel of observation through the most secret recesses of your iniquities? that they do not attend your temples? that they sneer at your teaching, and now study for themselves the true spirit of the gospel? that millions of men have shaken off your tyrannical yoke? and that were not kings and emperors your defenders, because you are their political engines to restrain masses which you keep down in ignorance, superstition, and servitude, the last prophecy of

Christ would soon perhaps have a terrible accomplishment? ” ” ”

While Isram spoke thus, Paul did not interrupt him; but he looked sad. Isram noticed it when he pronounced the last words, and asked him what in his account had hurt his feelings.

“ Venerable chief,” he answered, “ when I lived in the world, I heard say that the Romish prelates, priests, and monks had oppressed and still oppress the people. Besides, I noticed sometimes that their deeds were in discordance with the gospel; but I sighed over their misdeeds, and, according to what I had been taught in my infancy, I defended them, and threw on their ignominy the mantle of filial piety. When I entered into religion, I was ordered to believe that whatever emanates from ecclesiastical superiors bears the seal of divinity; that any control of their words and acts is sacrilegious, because it is said in the gospel, ‘ He that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me; ’ that it pertains to them to overrule humanity according to their own will; because it has been said to them, ‘ Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood; ’ that they are shepherds, and we their sheep; that whether they lead us to such or such pastures, shear us or spare our wool, reserve us for the fold, or destine us to the slaughter house, we must be dumb, and obey them like lambs, and without complaining walk to death.

“ This is, Isram, why I have been saddened by hear-

ing you censure the clergy, and also because the vengeance of God will perhaps pursue you ; for the ministers of Jesus Christ are more sacred than the holy ark was among the Jews ; and still it is related in the Bible that ‘Uzzah put forth his hand to the ark of God and took hold of it, for the oxen shook it. And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Uzzah ; and God smote him there for his error ; and there he died by the ark of God.’ ”

“Paul,” Isram answered, “my utterance has saddened you ; I regret it. Yet my father and I have compared, without exaggeration, the teaching and behavior of the ministers of your church with the obligations imposed upon them by the gospel. They are inviolable, you say ; then they are equal to God, for he alone is not liable before the tribunal of humanity. To blemish them, when they are traitors to their mission, is to despise them ; and to despise them is to despise Christ : we should then approve of the most infamous treasons and the most pernicious apostasy to the gospel and to Christ. To censure their words and deeds, when they mock mankind and God, is a profanation ; to disapprove them within one’s self is a sacrilege : we must then have eyes and not see, have ears and hear not, have a mind and understand nothing, be endowed with reason and not use this gift of our Maker, — what say I ? — we must trample upon it in using it wrongly and absurdly, in confounding good and evil, truth and error. The Holy Ghost, you add, has constituted the clergy overrulers of the human family : we must, in this case, resign our manly dignity, cast off our personality, and substitute for our

reason the reason of another. We are sheep; the bishops, priests, and monks are our shepherds. Whether they lead us to such or such pastures, shear us or spare our wool, reserve us for the fold, destine us to the slaughter house, we must be dumb and obey them, like lambs that, without complaining, walk to death: then God has said to man, when, intending to crown his work of love, he placed him on the earth, 'We gave to all beings a portion of individual life, emanating from the great whole of the collective life; no power is permitted to impose laws upon them; no hand is empowered to master their nature and change their condition of existence and development; they ever and invariably shall accomplish their ends. But thou alone, man, who art the masterpiece of our hands, — thou, whom we made "in our image, after our likeness," of whom we have said, "Let him have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth," — thou alone, man, we say, though endowed with the richest and most beautiful portion of life, shalt lose that portion of life, and shalt be overruled, enslaved, and oppressed by an outward power. We have imposed upon thee prelates, priests, and monks, vested with the power to say to you, "Men, the senses and limbs of your body and the faculties of your soul do not belong to you; they are ours. Therefore your eyes shall not read such writings, shall not look at such pictures, shall not glance at such persons, shall not witness such spectacles, shall feel but such pleasures; you shall shut or open them according to our will. Your ears shall not

listen to such chants and harmonious sounds, to such conversations and discourses. Your sense of smelling shall enjoy but such perfumes. The use of your sense of touch shall be circumscribed by limits assigned by us. We will overrule your taste to such an extent that you shall eat and drink not when and because you are hungry and thirsty, but when and because you will be allowed by us. We will determine the nature, quality, and quantity of your aliments and drinks, the hours and the duration of your meals. We bind you to all this under pain of mortal sin and hell. As to your limbs, they shall move or rest according to our will. Your mouths shall speak when permitted by us, and shall be silent when ordered by us; they shall utter words purified by the test of our will. According to our commandment your feet shall walk or shall be immovable; they shall not carry you to visit such persons, or families, to assist at such spectacles, or ceremonies, or profane assemblies, or religious meetings; in short, your feet shall carry you but where it pleases us to send you. We will rule the motion of your arms; in the days assigned by us they shall lift up for labor or shall fall again for rest. At one time we will cause sweat to overspread your face, so hard will be your labor; and at another time we will spare the expense of your strength. You shall bring and lay in our hands the product of your activity: we will divide it into two parts — the one shall be ours; it shall be sacred; you shall call it *tithe*; we will foretake it: we will adjudge to you the second part, in the use of which you shall obey our will and instructions. As to the faculties of your soul, your

memory shall reject any recollection declared by us sinful. Your intellect shall have but such thoughts; your hearts will be allowed such feelings and forbidden such others. Your will shall bend itself passively to ours. In short, you shall abdicate your individuality. Men, to speak briefly, you shall lose so completely your souls in ours, that your bodies will be but machines obeying and serving our will."

"Paul, I beg leave to ask you if to ascribe to God such words and such a will is not blasphemy. And still, this is the doctrine which the prelates, monks, and priests of the Romish church hold and preach."

"Isram," Paul answered, "it is the cry of my reason; but I am not allowed, or at least am afraid, to use it freely. It would be a great crime for me; the penalty would be endless punishment."

On this answer of Paul Isram appeared afflicted; he mourned over the tomb of an endeared soul lying, dead to light, in the coffin of the sacerdotal and monachal slavery, and buried in the deep grave of prejudice. Fearing to have hurt the feelings of Paul, he said to him, —

"Pardon, young Greek, if, relating the conversation that I had with my father, and the reflections of my own which I have imparted to you, I have injured your belief, and withal disturbed your conscience. I will henceforth avoid speaking of your church."

"Isram," Paul responded, "though I do not think as you do, I am aware of your intentions and of your good will towards me."

Isram continued : —

"But I must not lose sight of my narrative. I re-

sume the thread of my conversation with my father. He said to me, —

“ ‘My son, since you acknowledge that in the Romish church, which is the most numerous among Christians, the prelates, even the priests and monks, are not better than are our caliphs and sultans, tell me how the realization of the Christian fraternity is possible.’

“ ‘My father,’ I answered, ‘the time is come wherein the disciples of Christ will shake off the yoke of all these tyrants of the Romish church, — that pretended only true church of Christ, — not only of the prelates, priests, and monks, but even of kings and emperors who support them. Ignorance, fanaticism, and superstition will melt before the sun of the emancipation of intellect, of the flight of genius, of the gigantic development of the human mind, and of social progress; the acknowledgment of freedom of thought in politics, science, doctrine, and religion spreads its beams every where, and will shortly overflow the universe; sceptres are broken into dust; thrones fall to the earth; their fragments are used for bonfires, and the wind carries their ashes into the air; of them remains nothing but mournful and hateful recollections. Even the sword of the Goliath of the army hostile to men and God, the pope, is dull. In vain he threatens and handles it; he does not dare strike, for its blow would not wound; ignorance alone sharpened once its point and blade; in vain he defies and mocks the combatants of the gospel, of the holy cause of mankind and of God; the Lord will commission a David, who will stone and cast him down, will behead him, will triumphantly bring his head to the holy army, and will leave his

monstrous corpse lying in the mire of his crimes, and the scalpel of history will dissect his vital elements. Of him shall remain but the pestilential odor of the numberless crimes against mankind and God which he has heaped for so many centuries. The pope tries again to appear before men as reaching from earth to heaven; but he is now merely the great image that appeared to Nebuchadnezzar. His head is of fine gold; his breast and his arms are of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, his legs of iron, but his feet part of iron and part of clay. We shall see that a stone will shortly be cut out of the mountain without hands, and will smite the image upon his feet, that are of iron and clay, and will break them to pieces. Then will the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold be broken to pieces together, and will become like the chaff of the summer threshing floor; and the wind will carry them away, that no place may be found for them; and the stone that shall have smote the image will become a great mountain, and will fill the whole earth. What will this stone be? Christ. What will be this mountain, filling the world? The reign of Christian fraternity.

“ ‘ My father, is not the building of tyranny shaken in all its frames? Are not its crashings resounding to the farthest limits of the globe? Behold! And you will see entire walls disunited and moving. Hark! Do you not hear how, in their fall, they thunder to the ears and shake the whole building? Light and darkness, knowledge and ignorance, true worship and superstition, oppressors and oppressed fight in deadly strife. God blesses the holy cause; tyranny is ago-

nizing; the hour will shortly come when the true worshipper shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth, when men shall observe this maxim of Christ, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind: this is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." In one word, the hour will shortly come when all the countries of the world will rest their constitutions on this divine base — *all men are brethren*; when all nations will consider themselves as provinces of the universal nation — *mankind*; and will be forever tied to each other by this Christian constitution, as short as it is perfect and divine — *all men are brethren*. Then the seed of mustard, spoken of by Christ, will have grown, and, though the least of all seeds, will have become a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof; that is, the gospel will have grown and become a tree, so that the whole human family shall be fraternally united and sheltered under its foliage; and still it was the least of all doctrinal seeds; it had been sown in a narrow land of the earth, and had in growing been for centuries overloaded with the dry and dead branches of human institutions, and with the parasite plants of the prelates, priests, and monks united to absorb its nourishment.

"And in what manner has the tree of the gospel grown and become tall, large, and immense, so that it shelters all the members of the human family? By cutting off from the trunk the prelates, monks, and priests,

and all the sacerdotal inventions, which are injurious to the tree either by absorbing the food of the useful branches or hindering them from enlarging.'

" 'My son, should your language be true, — should Islamism be the misfortune of society, — you ought not to be a Christian; a son is never allowed to abandon the religion of his ancestors.'

" 'My father, were our forefathers right in adopting the new religion established by Mahomet?'

" 'Certainly, because Mahomet was commissioned by God to establish it.'

" 'My father, I believe that Jesus Christ, but not Mahomet, held from God his mission. Islamism, with me, is error; Christianity is truth: I embrace it.'

" 'At least, save the appearances; act as if you were a disciple of the prophet; be present in the assemblies of believers.'

" 'I owe myself to my conviction. On my part, it would be cowardice.'

" 'Then you renounce honors?'

" 'Yes, my father.'

" 'The good will and favor of the emperor?'

" 'Yes, my father; they would cost me too much.'

" 'You consent to quit your country?'

" 'Yes, if it is necessary.'

" 'Do you forget that death is the penalty of an apostate?'

" 'I know it.'

" 'And you brave it?'

" 'A Christian does not fear death. He abhors tyranny, disdains despots, and holds life dear only when he enjoys liberty.'

“ ‘Your doctrine does not forbid you to love your father, and obey him?’ ”

“ ‘On the contrary, it directs me to do so.’ ”

“ ‘Very well. I then command you, in the name of my paternal authority, to renounce Christianity, and to become again a disciple of the prophet.’ ”

“ ‘My father, you are not allowed by your paternal rights to impose upon me a religious conviction.’ ”

“ ‘And you resist?’ ”

“ ‘It is my duty.’ ”

“ ‘And you do not dread my wrath? And you defy my vengeance?’ ”

“ ‘My father, were I permitted to obey your will, I would yield to filial love, but not to your vengeance.’ ”

“ ‘From this hour you are no longer my son. You are in my eyes less than a slave. I will not reveal your apostasy to the emperor, for my name would be sullied if your head rolled under the cimeter. But I know what to do.’ ”

“ Young Greek, my father called then his guard. They chained and dragged me to the dungeon where the rebel slaves were imprisoned. The next day, soldiers entered, and demanded to speak with my father. They came from the emperor to make inquiries about my apostasy, of which some one had given him intelligence. It was said to me that he was exasperated, because I was one of his favorites, and that he intended to execute upon me an exemplary and cruel vengeance. I know not if it was by the order of my father, — though I suspect it, — but during the following night, I was released from my chains, led to a ship bound for Anapa, and embarked.

"I spent some time in Anapa, but was finally compelled to leave the city, being pursued even there by the wrath of the emperor, who wished to have me delivered into his hands. Having met in the wilderness with a colony of the tribe of Ossetes, who were at war with another colony, they took me into their ranks, chose me for their chief, and defeated their enemies. Since I have been among them, I have never heard of my father, though I have inquired often about him."

"Isram," asked Paul, "why did you remain on these mountains?"

"From gratitude for the tribe," Isram responded, "and chiefly to moralize and civilize them. I have married, lived long years, whitened, and shall die among them. Now, young Greek, you know what you desired to know of the history of my long life."

"Venerable chief," Paul said, "of what tyranny you have been the victim! For truth you have renounced the court of the emperor; quitted your country, your father; you have faced death, and passed your life on these mountains, far from civilized Europe, in the midst of a savage people. O, you have suffered much more than I! Your example gives me courage. I know now that truth has no country on earth; that a just man is always persecuted; that the thorns which crowned Christ prick the heart of his disciples. I understand that for them this prophecy is realized: 'I am come to send fire on the earth. . . . The father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father.' Isram, though fear hinders me from partaking of your religious belief, — which still would answer so well the dictates of my reason, and the propensities

of my heart,—I must admire the amelioration you have effected among the Ossetes. However, what astonishes me is, that they have not yet been Christianized.”

“Young Greek,” Isram answered, “it is but slowly that people change their habits; it is still more slowly they quit the religion they have been taught in their infancy. Ah! if the innumerable Romish priesthood, instead of preaching an anti-Christian, anti-human, and anti-social gospel, would preach, in word and example, the doctrine of Christ; if the more enlightened and more true apostles of the gospel, and the preachers of the true word of Christ, limited not their zeal; if they were convinced that the Christian religion ought not to be encircled in some countries; if they comprehended, theoretically and practically, that the will of Christ is, that all men be brothers; if, as Christ did, they carried in their wombs, with a boundless love, all the members of the human family to give them a spiritual birth,—the light of the gospel would shine to ignorant and barbarous nations, and soon the entire universe would rise up, would emerge from darkness, and would rejoice in this light; would march to knowledge, to civilization, to virtue, and to happiness. The word of Christ would be the guaranty of their success. He said to his apostles, ‘Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.’”

These last words made a deep impression upon Paul. The following days he spent in solitude, for the struggle was renewed in his mind and in his heart.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

CHASE. — PAUL'S RESOLUTION.



NE morning an extraordinary event happened in the valley. Hunters coming from the mountains carried with shouts of triumph a monstrous bear; an arrow was buried in his flank. The echoes of the valley repeated, "Praise and honor to Julia and Paul! She is as beautiful as flowers, and as valiant as the chief of our warriors! He is the handsomest among the youths of the valley, and though a stranger, the boldest among the hunters! She broke his chains, and he preserved her life! He is worthy of Julia, worthy of Isram, worthy of the Ossetes; let him be assistant of Isram in the government of the tribe."

The shepherds left their flocks, the laborers the fields, the Ossetines deserted the cottages; all rushed and united their merry songs and shouts of joy to those of the hunters. When they arrived at the cottage of Isram, they presented to him the monstrous bear, saying, that the arrow plunged in his flank had sprung from the bow of Julia; that the animal wounded had

in his fury seized, thrown down, and pressed Julia with his strong paws; that Paul, seeing her danger, ran, attacked the bear, rescued Julia, pierced and killed him with a *couteau de chasse*. "He is worthy of Julia, worthy of you, worthy of the Ossetes," they exclaimed; "let him be your assistant in the government of the tribe."

Isram thanked Paul, who, alas! though happy in having preserved the life of Julia, concealed under his smile the deepest agitation in his mind and the deepest sorrow in his heart. He kissed Julia with a paternal pride and affection, and expressed to the tribe his sentiments of gratitude.

The heart of Isram was filled with joy. He said to himself, "Paul loves Julia, Julia loves Paul. The tribe cherish him, and gave him to me to help my old age. My son is dead; he will replace him at my fire-side, and in my heart. He will be the prop of my old age; will receive my last breath, and close my eyes. I will depart from this life without anxiety, for I shall not leave my dear Julia alone; he will make her happy." Alas! he was mistaken. He found Julia alone weeping bitterly. He asked her what was the cause of her tears; but her only answer was, "I shall never more live one happy day." He then went to Paul, who thoughtfully walked in the orchard back of the cottage.

"Paul, not only your wishes will be satisfied, your love crowned, but you are called by the people to partake with me in the government of the tribe. I congratulate you."

"Alas!"

"What, Paul, and you are not happy?"

Paul sighed.

"Speak, Paul."

"I am the unhappiest man on earth."

"I am astonished at what you say. Why say you that you are the unhappiest man on earth?"

"Because I may not remain on these mountains, devote myself to the tribe, be your son, live and die with Julia, the best beloved of my heart."

"You may not! And why?"

"I am not permitted it."

"By your conscience?"

"Yes, venerable chief."

"You believe then that you would sin against God, do you?"

"Yes."

"Paul, you know my good will and affection for you; explain without restraint for what reasons you think so."

"Venerable chief, while I am on these mountains, I heap every day sin upon sin."

"What are you doing wrong?"

"I am forbidden to love Julia, and in spite of my will I yield to love. I am forbidden to love my family, and I love you as if you were my father. God calls me to the religious life, and I live far from the convent. I have vowed celibacy, and I think of marriage. I have sworn obedience to my superiors, and I do not live under their direction. I owe to the ministers of Jesus Christ the same respect I owe to God, and I have listened to your blasphemies against them. I am bound to believe their record as the word of God himself, and I have not closed my ears to your attacks

against their teaching. I am obliged to consider you as a heathen and a publican, and I live under the same roof. I am compelled by the laws of my holy church to kill you, since you are a heretic, an enemy of the church of Christ and of his gospel ; and far from cursing you, my heart feels a boundless gratitude and devotedness. You contribute to the prosperity of the Ossetes tribe, but do nothing for their souls, for you are not in the pale of the church of Christ, wherein you could be saved, and would save your people. Besides, with you I forget that God calls me to work out the salvation of souls. Therefore my sins exceed in number the hairs of my head ; I feel the weight of my prevarications upon my conscience. I must return to Naples, kneel before my spiritual father, confess these sins, receive the holy absolution that will cleanse my soul, and thus enter again into my divine calling. These are, venerable chief, the sins which I have committed on these mountains ; these are the reasons which oblige me to leave the tribe ; to bid you, my endeared father, and Julia, the too beloved of my heart, an eternal adieu."

"Dear Paul, does your reason inform you that you are guilty of these pretended sins and obligations?"

"Certainly not. But I must stifle the voice of my reason, believe and obey exclusively and blindly the teaching of the priests."

"When I recollect the history of your past life, I am not astonished at it. I will not attempt to show you how far the prejudices of your early education have led you in the labyrinth of error, for I am convinced that, unfortunately for you, years and your own

experience will enlighten you. I will not attempt to represent to you the affliction of Julia, whose despair will break down the life of her old grandfather. Alas! your prejudices have resisted filial love; every other love they can withstand. Yet let me say to you, that all that your mother spoke to you is true; that you have been misled, deceived, and blinded by the priests; that, so far as I know you, I must judge that after a while you will see light; but I am afraid it will be too late for your happiness. Keep well in your mind my last words, for they are those of an old man who has studied the priests, Romanism, the gospel, society, the human mind, and heart.

"Since you believe that it is to you an obligation of conscience to leave us, and to return to Naples, receive from my hands the means to go there. I will give you a guide who shall accompany you to Anapa. If ever, when light shines into your eyes, your heart wants to live on these mountains, come again to share the fireside of Julia, and of her old grandfather."

"Isram, your words are a spear transpiercing my heart. Why am I not allowed to yield to what I feel for your tribe, and chiefly for you and my too dear Julia?"

"I deplore your prejudices, but I know and prize your sentiments. My best wishes will accompany you."

"But can you forgive me?"

"Knowing as I do the perplexity of your mind, I not only forgive you, but indulge you in your resolution."

"Will Julia forgive me?"

"Certainly ; and what you shall suffer from the priests will increase her sufferings and love."

"Good Heavens !"

"To spare to her the bitterness of the separation, I will give her the intelligence of your departure only in a few days, and present to her your farewell."

"God ! how unhappy I must be on earth !"

Isram called for a guide, and soon after he was blessing with a trembling voice Paul, who, pale, in extreme agitation, and shedding bitter tears, was thanking him, bidding him adieu, and whispering these words :
"Poor, and too beloved Julia !"

CHAPTER XXXIV.

DISAPPOINTMENT OF THE TRIBE OF OSSETES BY
PAUL'S DEPARTURE.

THE tribe rejoiced. The old men said to each other, "We now can live our last days, and die in peace; our sons and grandsons will see happy days; they will have for governor a chief worthy of Isram." The young men repeated the praises of Paul, adding, "He is the boldest of the hunters; he will be our chief in our chases. He is valiant; he will lead us to the field of battle, when we shall fight to defend our cottages. He is industrious; he will guide us in the culture of our lands. He is wise; he will bring peace, union, and happiness among families, and to our firesides. Julia loves him; he will be the son of our beloved governor." The young Ossetines whispered, "He loves Julia, and he is the handsomest of the young men of the valley; Julia will be proud of him, and happy."

The old men had already assigned the day of the installation of Paul in his office of assistant of Isram. It was to be a *fête* for the tribe, and great rejoicings were

to take place. The people, who noticed that Paul accompanied Isram no more in his visits to families, inquired of each other where he was; but nobody knew. They asked Isram, and he did not answer plainly. Many days had passed away, and Paul was not seen in the valley. Then Isram gave them the intelligence of his departure. To praises and affection succeeded a general indignation against Paul. All vociferated against him words of malediction. Nevertheless, when Isram informed them that he had approved him in his resolution of leaving the valley; that, in spite of his devotedness to the tribe, he had been obliged to obey imperious circumstances calling him to Naples; and that he had blessed him before his departure, they changed their maledictions into benedictions. As to Julia, when Isram, in a tone of the deepest affliction, presented to her the farewell of Paul, she, with the accent of despair, and with trembling lips, said, "I had read in his looks that I should never more live a happy day. My life is cut down as a plant by the scythe."

CHAPTER XXXV.

PAUL IN NAPLES. — HE CALLS UPON THE REVEREND FATHER FRANCIS.



TWO months after, Paul was knocking at the door of his monastery in Naples.

"What will you?" asked the porter.

"To be introduced to the reverend father superior," he answered.

"Who are you?"

"Brother Paul Basilos."

"You are Brother Paul Basilos; but you do not wear the religious habit."

"It matters not."

"Probably you are mistaken. You do not belong to our convent."

"I certainly am not mistaken."

"I have never heard of a monk of our order named Brother Paul Basilos."

"I left the convent a long time ago."

"To go where?"

"To Russia, with Father Ignatius."

"I have never heard of Father Ignatius, of whom you speak."

"I am surprised at what you say."

"Who sent you there?"

"The reverend father superior."

"How long since you left this convent?"

"Several years."

"I understand now why I am not acquainted with you, and have not heard of Father Ignatius. I lived at that time in another convent of our order. You will find a great change in the persons of the convent. The reverend father superior died, and has been replaced by Reverend Father Francis."

"Reverend Father Francis?"

"Yes."

"Please let him know that I wish to see him."

"I was just going to his apartment to call for him. Wait a moment in the parlor."

"I will."

While Paul was alone in that hall, which recalled to his mind so many thoughts, bitter recollections and painful reflections heaved upon his soul. He remembered his mother falling on the pavement which was under his eyes; all his past sufferings in the convent; the church which had been the cradle of his love; the streets and squares of the city wherein he looked for Julia; and the country around Naples, which he had explored so often in his solitary rambles. He thought of his departure from the convent; of his mother falling, fainting, and perhaps dying on the quay of Constantinople; of his shipwreck; of the long year spent among barbarous people, having charge of their flocks; of his captivity; chiefly of the tribe of the Ossetes; of his deliverance, of Isram, of Julia, and of the time spent

at their fireside; of his departure, with its circumstances. He saw, before his eyes, the image of Julia, dying in her sorrow and despair. His soul was absorbed and agitated by these thoughts, recollections, and reflections, when Father Francis walked into the parlor, embraced him, and, after the usual salutations of the monks, led him to his apartment.

Paul expressed the pleasure he felt to see him again, and then recounted to him all his adventures. Father Francis listened to him with the greatest attention; and when Paul ceased to speak, he said to him, —

“ Brother Paul, I congratulate you for the marks of predilection with which God, in his mercy, has favored you. He has strengthened you against your mother; preserved you from the waves, especially from the impious doctrines of the chief of the Ossetes’ tribe, and from the seductions of the woman — that viper which has won your heart. But, alas! how innumerable have been your offences against God! how right you were in saying to Isram, that you heaped in his house sins upon sins! Fall, then, to my feet, that I may give you the holy absolution.”

Paul having confessed his sins and received absolution, Father Francis said to him, “ Now, Paul, you are reconciled with God; go and quit your secular dress, to take again your holy religious *habit*; begin a retreat of nine days, to shake off the dust of your feet, to make penance of your sins; and then you shall commence your theological studies, that you may, when worthy of it, be ordained a priest. I authorize you, as a reward, to live among the fathers of the convent, though, according to the rule, you should be among the scholastics.”

According to the order of the superior, Paul consecrated nine days to prayer and penance; then studied theology. A few months passed away, and Paul was no longer the same man. Seeing the trifling and absurd proofs put forth by Bonacina, Tornelli, Vasquez, St. Thomas, Suarez, etc., all the great divines, to advocate the doctrines of Popery; hearing the infamous treatises of morals of these and other theologians; reading the subversive and obscene works of the casuists; witnessing every day the monks haunting inns, taverns, houses of ill fame; seducing young ladies, nuns, and even married women; coming to the convent drunk; and mingling with the lowest vices prayer, mass, and other practices of worship, — his doubts increased. He thought that all his mother and Isram had said to him of the misconduct and scandals of the Romish clergy being true, perhaps what they had said of the doctrines of the church was true also; so much so that his theological studies shook his faith. These reflections excited indignation in his soul, for the sad recollection of what he had suffered, and of what he had caused his mother, Isram, and Julia to suffer, assailed his memory, excited his regrets, and inflamed his love. In vain Father Francis, to whom he confessed these sins of doubt, used the hot iron of blind obedience, and inflicted upon him the most humiliating and austere penances; his doubts became stronger, and were about to change in his mind into certainty, as the power of his reason was growing in the midst of his internal conflicts.

Father Francis seeing that the vow of blind obedi-

ence was no longer for Paul a sacred bond ; that being tied by this sole obligation of conscience, his mind would be sooner or later emancipated, would see light, and then would shake all at once the monastical and Romish belief and practices, he yielded to necessity, and undertook to resolve by reasoning the objections of Paul. He then discussed often with him.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

DISCLOSURES.



Ten o'clock, one evening, — the hour fixed by Father Francis, who, usually meeting with Paul in the morning, had forgotten both the hour and the appointment, — Paul knocked at his door, and believing that he heard the usual answer of his superior, "Walk in," he went in; and O, surprise! he saw a young woman, who, at the sight of Paul, tried to conceal herself, and exclaimed, —

"What! Francis, you have not locked the door!"

"I forgot it, dear Rosa," Reverend Father Francis responded. "But do not trouble yourself; this friar does not know you."

She rose up with anger, arrayed herself in her male costume, and, murmuring some words of fury, — not listening to Father Francis, who tried to calm her, even without looking at him, — left the room, glided noiselessly along retired corridors, opened a night door, and went out.

At the sight of that woman, Paul remained as motionless as if he had been thunderstruck. When

she was about to leave the room, he rushed to the door in a sudden start, and walked out.

"Where are you going, Paul?" Father Francis said to him. "Stay here."

On the injunction of his superior, Paul remained. Pale, his eyes cast down, his hands folded in the wide sleeves of his religious gown, he retired into a corner of the room, and took a seat. He appeared thoughtful.

Whilst Father Francis was getting up, and carelessly, slowly dressing himself, he was plunged in deep reflection. Afterwards he walked to and fro in the room, and presently he said to Paul, with a strange smile, —

"Brother Paul, the part which for several years I have played with you must end. Now my comedy is over. Let us spend the night talking, for I have much to say to you."

Paul, who, recollecting all that his mother and Isram had said to him, suspected what would be the subject of conversation, answered, —

"I will."

"As I know your discretion, and devotedness to me, I will speak to you freely about many things which I know will interest you."

"I shall be very glad of it."

"You probably were surprised when you saw that young woman."

"Yes."

"Did you believe that I lived like an anchorite?"

"Certainly."

"You know now that you were greatly mistaken."

"Yes."

"Do you think that that woman is handsome?"

"I believe she is."

"In fact she is so. You seem astonished at my language."

"It cannot be otherwise."

"I understand it: such language from me is so strange for your ears. You find it a little different from my former way of speaking to you?"

"Quite so."

Paul, who intended to avail of this opportunity to inform himself, and take a strong and decisive resolution, tried to conceal his feelings of contempt and indignation. He thus answered briefly, but with politeness.

"Then, Paul, you think that that woman is beautiful?"

"Yes."

"What would you say, then, of several young ladies who favor me with their visits? They truly are charming."

"Indeed!"

"They are infinitely handsomer than that woman. I receive her by charity!" And the father laughed.

"Is she married?"

"Yes. She is the wife of Viscount Forra — But I must stop; it is useless to point out her name."

"And her husband is not aware of her misconduct?"

"Not at all. He loves her to jealousy; but she dislikes him now as much as she loved him when they married."

"In this case, he suspects her infidelity?"

"No. I prudently told her to dissemble, and to

show to him tenderness and love. Thus, *il n'y voit que du feu.*"

"Still, as she visits you often, he ought to notice it."

"Of course; but he does not draw the true inference. He is very much pleased with her visits to me, for I am her confessor, and the director of her conscience. He naturally believes that I restrain her from loving another man; and as she confesses twice, and takes sacrament four times, a week, he is convinced that she is one of the most virtuous and pious ladies of the congregation. Besides, I am his own confessor, and he trusts in me fully."

"He ought to know that she sometimes does not spend the night at home."

"Certainly not. She has, by my counsels, persuaded him to buy a country house. He has to go often to attend to the business, and he spends the night there. Then she comes *incognito* to visit me. Moreover, when I confess her, as you easily understand, we talk freely, and meet in the vestry, *where we are without a witness*. As to the young women whom I prefer to her, I see them oftener."

"Are they women of education and social respectability?"

"Several of them are."

"Their parents and acquaintances probably suspect their bad behavior?"

"No; because they come to me to confess and take sacrament many times a week. They, on the contrary, are considered as pious and virtuous young ladies. They have many lovers, and of the highest standing;

but on account of me, they refuse to marry ; which is, of course, displeasing their families, but they remain faithful to me ; it is all I will. Even their poor lovers come to me with folded hands, supplicating me and giving me money, that I may take their interest, and plead their cause with them. I promise it of course, but I am not short sighted enough to fulfil my promise."

"In what manner did you win the love of all these women ?"

"By confession. It is an infallible means. I am a good spider to spread my web and catch the flies."

"O !"

"As you see, Brother Paul, I am a great sinner."

When he pronounced these words, an impious and licentious smile was delineated on his lips.

"Yes, Father Francis," Paul answered.

"You have confessed to me so many times, that I must once confess to you."

Saying so, he laughed *aux éclats*.

Such cynicism and impiety stirred up in Paul so much horror and indignation, that, lest he should hurt Father Francis, he did not answer, but asked him, —

"Is the behavior of the fathers of the convent like yours ?"

"Brother Paul," Father Francis responded, "if heretofore I have spoken to you so plainly, it is because I intend to choose you for my friend, and to appoint you, as soon as you shall be ordained a priest, to one of the highest dignities of our order. I will now say to you all about our convents. We have three classes of monks, viz., the *rascals*, the *blind*, and the *initiated*. The *rascals* are those friars who are drunk-

ards, haunt the inns, taverns, bar rooms, and houses of prostitution. The *blind* are those who, as you have done to this day, believe and practise what they are taught by the superiors. The *initiated*, are those who, having been emancipated from the belief and practices imposed upon them, either by the strength of their own reason or by the good will of the superior, as I do now towards you, behave themselves exactly as I do. They still have to observe carefully appearances."

"By what means can women penetrate into their rooms?"

"The porter has the watchword. To avoid scandal they take a male costume. Besides, we have many doors in the garden — used, it is said, to cultivate it; but the truth is, they are night doors. Moreover, the confessional and the vestry are very convenient for purposes of that kind. Suppose, even, that in several circumstances these means cannot be used; these women feign they are sick, and want their confessors; then nothing is easier than to meet them in their rooms without a witness."

"O Father Francis, I should never have suspected it."

"Still, except very few who are what you have been, those monks are the best of the convents. As to the others, they are worse than brutes. They imitate those men of whom St. Paul said, 'Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonor their own bodies between themselves. Even they go further in their brutish desires, for they use * * *.'"

"Then, Father Francis, tell me sincerely what you think of the vows of religion."

"This is the truth. They are mere traps."

"Why then be so anxious to find novices, and impose these vows upon their consciences as strict bonds?"

"Your question calls me on another ground, viz. : by whom and why have religious orders been established, (by religious orders I do not mean the Christian associations of the first centuries.) They have been established by the popes. And why? To support him and advocate his interests all over the world. What is our Roman Catholic church, or Popery? It is a system of ignorance, idolatry, superstition, and tyranny. What is the clergy? The army of the pope. The cardinals, patriarchs, generals of religious orders, archbishops, and bishops are the great officers of that army. The superiors of convents, the grand vicars of the bishops, the canons, chaplains, and archpriests, are the officers of the great officers. The common monks are the guard of honor and of safety of the general in chief, and the common secular priests are the soldiers. The nuns are another portion of the army. They have their great officers, viz., the general superiors of their various orders, which great officers have also their officers, viz., the superiors of their houses, schools, and so on.

"The pope is general in chief of the army. The great officers, common officers, and soldiers must obey him passively and blindly. He established this army in the name of the temporal welfare and spiritual interests of the human family; in the name of the gos-

pel of Christ and of God, but to oppose the temporal welfare and spiritual interests of the human family ; to oppose the gospel ; to war against Christ and God. Lest this army might be dissolved by the people when they see how injurious they are to mankind, what deadly enemies they are to the gospel, to Christ, and to God, he makes the nuns, priests, monks, and some subaltern dignitaries, believe that obeying passively and blindly either himself or the cardinals, patriarchs, generals of religious orders, etc., they obey God himself. As to those who among them would be intelligent enough to penetrate his selfish, tyrannical, anti-Christian, and impious views, he promotes them to dignities. Lest, being conscientious, they desert the ranks of his army, and speak the truth to the too credulous people who are his victims, he seduces them in enabling them to swim in money ; to be honored ; to satisfy their pride and selfishness, all the brutish desires of their bodies. When they have been through these means won to his interests, he lets them know the watchword of his sacred quackery. Moreover, lest they betray him after having been won, he has united to the great of the world, to kings, and emperors. He has said to them, ' Let us pass a contract of association. Man is a wolf to his fellow-men. The people are a mine ; let us work it, and partake of the benefit. Lend me your material power, your sword, and I will lend you my spiritual omnipotence, my divine sword.' They agreed, and sanctioned their alliance by an oath. Hence all the dignitaries of the Papal army, when unveiling the quackery of the pope, are considered by the great of the world, kings, and emperors, as their own enemies ;

they are condemned to fines, prisons, banishment, and scaffolds. Besides, the pope has his secret band of murderers, who, in the dark, poniard or poison them.

"Now, Brother Paul, I answer directly to your question. You asked me why we are anxious to find novices, and impose upon them, as strict bonds of conscience, the vows of religion, — which are, I said to you, a mere trap. You ought to understand that we want, not only to recruit, but to increase our Papal army; that the various religious orders should people their houses of novitiate, and the bishops their seminaries."

"Father Francis, what you say of the pope, of the regular and secular clergy, makes me desirous to address you many questions. Am I permitted it?"

"Certainly."

"Are the nuns immoral?"

"They are more cautious than the monks, and give rise to fewer scandals."

"Have they sometimes amorous relations with the monks?"

"It is their daily bread."

"Are they allowed to enter the convents to see them?"

"They, of course, are forbidden it by the rule; but this is for pretence. They disguise themselves, and have the keys of the night doors of the convents."

"All of them do not entertain criminal relations with the monks — do they?"

"Some of them do not. For instance, the cloistered nuns. I do not mean the superiors, for they hold the keys of their houses."

"Are the common cloistered nuns virtuous?"

"Many of them are chaste, but others are not. Their imagination being inflammable and kindled by solitude, they hold in disgust the practices of devotion; regret what they left in the world, the praises, regards, and adorations, which they reaped in society; and seeing their beauty fading in obscurity within the walls of a cloister, they fall into despair, and give up to unlawful desires. They love unnaturally each other; entertain among themselves a monstrous love, and give themselves to incredible, degrading, and brutish practices. This is what the ascetic authors term *peculiar friendship*. Be sure that when they meet with their *ordinary* and *extraordinary* confessors they have a good time. They are practically taught how to pluck up the rose without being pricked by its thorns!" And the father laughed.

"Father Francis, what you say is so surprising, so incredible, that, should any one else inform me about it, I could not believe it."

"Yet I do not exaggerate."

"Are, then, no cloistered nuns virtuous?"

"Many of them are, particularly those who are not handsome. Some others indulge to low desires on the children whom they educate — but cautiously, lest parents, becoming aware of it, should recall their children, and cease to patronize their schools."

"O, horrible!"

"Have you noticed that, wherever you see a nunnery, there is a convent in the vicinity? What would the moon do without the sun?" The father accompanied these last words with an expressive smile.

"Is the money of the monks and of the nuns in common?"

"Yes; but we do not let the people know it."

"How can the monks and the nuns make so much money? They are immensely rich."

"As to the monks, they try to have novices from the wealthiest families, and pocket their patrimonies. They say to the people that they have vowed poverty, are not rich, and despise fortune; that the more money they shall give to them in the name of the Lord, the more they shall be rewarded by God here below and hereafter, according to these words of the gospel: 'And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, He shall in no wise lose his reward.' Thus they are presented by the people with money and other kinds of property; and the greatest part of their devotees, being rich, give them a large amount of money. Being the confessors of many wealthy old bachelors, old maids, old widows and widowers, they say to them that they hold the key of paradise, and that, if they bequeath to them their inheritances, they will go straight to paradise; which proposal is always accepted, for these old people are credulous and fanatical. Besides, the monks have estranged them from their families by artful means. Again, they have banks; they loan large capitals, and deal on a large scale; which the people do not know, because, to prevent all suspicion, they choose faithful and able worldlings, who in swelling the treasures of the monks do their own business. Add to this the income from indulgences, dispensations, administration

of sacraments, chiefly of absolutions, which they bestow for money on scandalous ladies ; add the immense amount of collections of money taken in churches and among families, the immense benefit of the sale of medals, scapulars, beads, images, books of mass, of prayers, and of devotion ; add the money which showers into the chests put in their churches and at the doors of the convents, what they harvest in preaching novenas, retreats, jubilees, missions, Sunday discourses ; what they harvest in replacing the secular clergy in their pastoral functions, in saying to the devotees and rich women who bring them masses, 'We monks do not receive money, at least privately, for masses,' in order that these faithful, instead of one dollar that they intended to offer, may, being edified by this admirable disinterestedness, give four dollars to the superior of the convent. Finally, add the incalculable treasures which they hoard up by their public schools and colleges ; withal, add to all this that the religious order spend scarcely the seven hundredth of their annual revenue. Brother Paul, do you understand now how the monks get rich ? ”

“ Yes ; but I do not understand how they reconcile it with the gospel.”

“ Pooh ! the gospel ! ”

“ Can the nuns make as much money as the monks ? ”

“ No, because they have not the same means at their disposal. They have, to deceive the people, some gratuitous schools, which, notwithstanding, are richly endowed by the munificence of the faithful ; they keep public schools and female seminaries, wherein they get a good deal of money from families, from

peculiar gifts, from alms, from collections, from subscriptions artfully imposed upon their pupils under the pretext of adorning the chapels, etc., and so on. They derive, too, a large income from the monopoly of the needle work; for, having a great many hands which they are not obliged to pay, they ruin by an irresistible competition the women of the people, whom they deprive of their daily bread."

"In what manner do the monks and nuns gather so many pupils in their public schools and colleges?"

"By means of confession, of their spies, and of the pupils themselves."

"By means of confession! But how is it possible?"

"Nothing is easier. The monks bid their penitents, chiefly their devotees, to praise and recommend their schools and colleges among families, and to speak against universities."

"You say that they have spies?"

"A cloud of them, and in all classes of society."

"For what purpose have they spies?"

"To serve their interests in society."

"Are these spies paid by the monks?"

"Not at all."

"In that case, how can they find spies?"

"Listen to me. We monks are influential among families, even more influential than the secular clergy. We are able to protect and be useful to all those who enlist themselves in our secret police; through our influence a magistrate is promoted to dignities, a lawyer monopolizes the business at the bar, a physician gets a large and lucrative practice, a merchant is large-

ly patronized, and so on. Do you understand now, Brother Paul, in what manner we get spies?"

"Yes, Father Francis."

"Very well. Now you can easily understand, too, how these people send a great many pupils to our public schools and colleges. They are compelled not only to send us their sons, and our nuns their daughters, but the children of their friends and acquaintances; for we do for them according to what they do for us."

"How can you get a greater number of pupils through your pupils themselves?"

"Knowing that children do not like study, and are fond of amusements, we indulge their wishes, and do not contradict them. Knowing that their mothers are very much pleased when we lavish upon them those thousand little enervating maternal cares, instead of the bread of science, of useful knowledge, we give them plenty of cakes, etc. Knowing, too, that children like to be publicly praised, by which praises their parents are flattered, we noise abroad that, at the end of our scholastic year, we shall distribute rewards to our pupils; the people flock together, and a large crowd assist at the solemn ceremony. The children recite, gesticulating on a stage, some fables, some passages of history, etc., comprising pretty nearly all the stock of science which we gave them, and for which their parents paid very dear. To make the parents and the people believe that they have improved, we expose some drawings, some needlework, some writings, and read some literary compositions which are not their own work. To conceal better our quackery,

we even announce to the assembly that some of our pupils are ready to sustain publicly an examination in many branches of science which they have studied ; but we choose the less ignorant ; and, lest they should be closely questioned, we give the watchword to the examiners and a short program of a few elementary questions. to which these pupils are able to answer. As, by rewarding only the pupils who are worthy of it, the others and their parents would be displeased, we give them also some reward. Still, lest our distribution of rewards should be considered as a mockery, we prudently debar from the common remuneration the pupils who belong to poor families, or to parents who pay, it is true, the board, but do not bestow upon us peculiar favors and donations, the displeasure of whom, therefore, is of no consequence.

“ Thus our pupils, and, above all, the young girls of the female seminaries of our nunneries, are pleased with us ; they praise our family care and teaching in the presence of other children ; these children are naturally anxious to attend our schools and colleges ; and their parents esteem themselves happy to accede to their wishes. Besides, as we must, between us, concede that we are far behind the universities in learning and teaching, and that their pupils are better informed than ours because they are bound to a hard and constant labor to be graduated, it is for us of the greatest importance to gain and preserve the affection of our pupils.

“ Brother Paul, you ought to understand now how, through our pupils themselves, we fill our schools and colleges.”

"Since it is so, the convents and nunneries accumulate an immense amount of property?"

"They do so. That you may have an idea of it, let us enter my business closet. We will peruse my books and registers, and you will see how wealthy are our convents."

Father Francis and Brother Paul rose.

"Wait a moment, Brother Paul," said Father Francis. "I must take the key."

Having said so, he went to one of the corners of the room. As he touched an invisible spring, an iron plate moved, and he took from a case, dug within the thickness of the wall, a double and heavy brass key. He opened a private door, and both descended a narrow and secret staircase. Father Francis unlocked an iron door, which swung on its hinges as the door of a dungeon, and they entered into the closet. It was a large square, without windows, but lighted by a skylight. From the floor to the ceiling, the walls were covered with joinery, richly wrought upon, and divided into countless cases, filled with books, registers, rolls of paper, letters, and papers of every kind. Along each side of the square was a desk, overloaded with notes, etc.; and in the middle, a table was covered with a velvet cloth, elegantly embroidered, before which was a luxuriant elbow chair.

"Brother Paul," said Father Francis, "this table is for my use. These desks are for my secretaries, whom I choose among the fathers who are initiated into the secrets of our convent, and are my friends; you will be in a short time one of them. The cases are without tickets, that nobody else can find where are the

most important of our papers ; it will take you a few months before you know all about it. The closet is lighted by a skylight, and located in the inner part of the convent, so that strangers, even the fathers of the convent, suspect nothing about its contents. Behold in the thickness of the wall our iron chest."

And saying so, Father Francis opened a secret door, and showed to Paul a great iron chest, wherein, in the low division, lay, close to each other, piles of bank bills, and in the upper a heavy pile of silver and gold, which in moving, he caused sharply to gingle.

"This money," Father Francis said, "will not sleep a long while. It is the inheritance of one of my rich devotees, to whom I lately opened paradise. Fine loan, indeed ! A merchant, who is hunted up by his famished creditors, asked this money of one of our agents ; he will pay twenty per cent. : this rate will help the poor devil in becoming bankrupt ; but it is his own affair."

Father Francis took then from a case a register in folio, shut up with a clasp and padlock. "This is," he said, opening it, "the summary of the titles of our possessions. Peruse it, and then tell me if we have to fear starvation."

Paul perused some hundred pages, and felt such an indignation that he involuntarily whispered, —

"And the gospel !"

"This book is our gospel," Father Francis answered, with an impious laugh.

"O !"

"Poor Paul, you were very far from suspecting what an easy and sumptuous life you could live in this convent."

"O, certainly."

"Now give me this book, for I wish you to peruse some others. You should be initiated into the secrets of my closet."

Father Francis took the book, sealed and fixed it in its case. He then chose and piled many registers on his table; seated himself in his elbow chair, and invited Paul to take a seat near him. Father Francis said to Paul, on opening one of them, —

"This one contains the bills of our creditors." And he turned rapidly the leaves, pointing out only the amount of the bills. He added, —

"You see, Brother Paul, that we have plenty of heavy loans. They afford us a good deal of money; for the half of them is placed over the legal rate."

"But how can you get more than the legal rate? You expose yourself to be juridically pursued."

"We loan our money through agents, who are responsible before the laws."

"But they expose themselves?"

"Of course; but it is not our business."

"How can they escape the rigor of the laws?"

"We say to them, when it is a question, for instance, to loan a hundred dollars, to give only ninety, and to compel the borrower to acknowledge in his bill that he received one hundred. Thus they are entitled to ask more than the legal rate."

"The debtors make known this artfulness of your agents, do they not?"

"Sometimes. But we are behind the curtain; we do not care for it. Besides, our agents do good business; they are above the public opinion."

"With your usury rate you ruin many families?"

"Certainly. But man is in principle and fact a wolf to his fellow-man. The chief thing is to save appearances."

"And your preaching against usury? And the gospel? And your vow of poverty?"

"All these are for pretence."

"O, Father Francis!"

"I understand your astonishment. You are exactly like a prisoner, who, having lived a long while in a dark dungeon, cannot bear the beams of the sun. Having been so many years in darkness, a brisk transition to light blinds you."

Paul did not reply. He appeared thoughtful. His cheeks were crimson.

"Let us peruse another register," Father Francis said; and he took up another. "Ah, this second one is our *land book*. Peruse it, and judge, by the amount of the annual revenue of our farms, if we have ground enough to be buried."

While Paul was cursorily glancing at every page, Father Francis said to him, —

"I do not show you either our *day books*, or our ledgers, or the many others which fill several shelves. But here is our *commercial book*. Look at it, and you will tell me whether or not we are successful and smart in business."

"Your *commercial book*! But you are not merchants?"

"Of course we do not keep stores in our own name; it would be too impolitic; but we own the goods, and our agents sell them. This they easily do, for we send them good customers."

Paul perused the book, without uttering a single word, and without any apparent indignation.

Father Francis took up a large register: "Brother Paul," he said, "this is the book which we call the *book of hope*. Therein are registered the names and amount of the fortunes of the lords, of the richest families, of the old bachelors, maids, widowers, widows, and devotees, the favors of which we have to win in order to obtain their protection, their gifts, chiefly their inheritance. See for yourself whether or not the mine is rich, and our prospects brilliant."

Paul perused the book with the greatest attention. A bitter recollection seemed to absorb his mind.

"Have you done?" Father Francis said.

"Nearly," Paul answered.

Father Francis opened two other books.

"Paul," he said, "I wish to show you these two books. The one of *our schools and colleges*; the other called the *sacred book*."

And he perused them under the eye of Paul, pointing out the large amount of money which they harvest by means of the schools and colleges of the order; by means of novenas, retreats, jubilees, missions, sale of beads, medals, images, scapulars, etc.; by means of mass, confession, and administration of sacrament.

Father Francis put them aside, and took up another book, saying, —

"This one that falls in my hands is our *black book*. It contains the denunciations of the lay friars and monks. Thus I am aware of all that is going on among them."

Paul turned away his eyes, and after reading two

or three pages of it, shut the book; for he was afraid to give vent to his displeasure and indignation.

"Here is another," Father Francis said. "It is the book of our *secret police*. All the reports of our lay spies are laid down herein." And, turning the pages, he added, "Do you see the details of the intrigues which are going on in the courts among emperors, kings, queens, princes, lords, ladies, and courtesans? Do you see the watchword and conspiracies of certain *secret societies* against these oppressors of the people, with which oppressors we are associated, and whom we have to support? Therein is related what is going on in secrecy among the most influential families, and in the sanctuary of their firesides, in all classes of society. Mark, also, how exactly and thoroughly we are informed of what is enacted in republics."

Afterwards Father Francis took up another book, saying,—

"This is the second volume of the same book. After a while you shall read it attentively, so that you may understand and inform yourself on the means which we use to derive benefit from the reports of our spies, and to influence the political, social, and thereby religious events. I say, and thereby religious events, for we take an interest in political and social events only for the triumph of Romanism. Autocracy being our banner, we hate all other forms of government. We hate, with all the fibres of our heart, a republican government, because it exists both from the people and for the people. We hate a constitutional government, because it smells of democracy. We hate an absolute government, because an absolute king, em-

peror, or dictator, is a usurper of the rights of the pope, who, we say, is commissioned by God to establish and rule the *universal monarchy*, viz., to impose upon the body and soul of every man living on earth his arbitrary will. Still we hate less the latter form of government, because it is a step to reach autocracy.

"You shall study carefully this other book, which is just now open. It will inform you of the means which we use to war against and put down philosophy, the Greek church, and particularly Protestantism, which is our most dreaded enemy; to disseminate disunion in kingdoms and empires; to disturb and destroy chiefly republics."

Paul listened to Father Francis with the deepest silence. In spite of his own will, he darted on him fiery looks, which betrayed his feelings. Still, Father Francis, in the distraction of his mind, did not notice it.

"Brother Paul," Father Francis said, "the other books which lie on the table are our books of correspondence with the convents of our order, with the various religious corporations, with bishops, cardinals, etc. You will peruse them at your leisure moments. I am about giving you now the greatest proof of my affection and trust."

And he went to one of the corners of the closet, took from a deep case an iron box, unlocked it, and took out a book.

"This is," he said, "our book of confession. We keep registered therein the number, names, amount of fortunes, the gifts, sins, and revelations of the penitents whom we confess, whether they are friars, monks,

priests, bishops, cardinals, lords, princes, emperors, or kings."

"O Father Francis!"

"Certainly; and if you have any desire to do so, you can read therein your own sins."

And he laid the book down on the table. But Paul did not open it, and asked him, —

"For what purpose have you such a book?"

"What! you do not suspect it?"

"I suspect something, but probably I am mistaken."

"This book enables us to direct individuals, families, cities, governments, and society."

"Then the confessors reveal to you the confessions of their penitents, do they?"

"Yes."

"All of them?"

"Yes. Some of them, those who are initiated as you are now, reveal directly the confessions of their penitents, and, it may be cursorily said, we initiate only the monks who are smart and popular. The others do not reveal directly the confessions of their penitents; but being bound by the vow of blind obedience to answer my questions, they inform me indirectly of all about it."

"And when you send the fathers to far distant missions, how is it then possible?"

"Commonly they make such revelations when they come back. If they have to give me some important intelligence, they write to me, either with signs agreed between us, or, instead of pen, with a tallow pencil, or some other way — it is so easy to deceive the spies."

"Father Francis, are the people aware of the half of what you tell me?"

"Certainly not. They would stone us."

"Are the philosophers, and chiefly the Protestants, aware of it?"

"Not at all."

"Even their leading men?"

"Some of them have suspicions."

"They speak of it — do they not?"

"No."

"It is astonishing."

"As to me, I am not astonished at it."

"And why?"

"Because they, commonly, are tolerant, charitable, honest, and truthful. They are so much so, that they themselves fill our chests. A portion of the expenses for building our churches, keeping them in repair, for purchasing episcopal, sacerdotal, church, and sacristy ornaments, gold ostensoriums, ciboriums, chalices, and other altar vases, and for supporting our monachal and sacerdotal luxury, are paid, in Catholic countries, by philosophers themselves. A portion of all these expenses is paid, in Protestant countries, by Protestants themselves."

"It is precisely because they are honest and truthful that they ought to express their indignation?"

"Not knowing from their own observation and experience what I now tell you, they would be afraid, in doing so, to transgress the great commandment of charity imposed upon them by the natural law and the gospel. All we have more than they in power, superiority of number, organization, and influence over society, is derived from their honesty, charity, and truthfulness; for in opposing us they use only lawful and

honorable means ; to us, on the contrary, all means are laudable."

"Thus, Father Francis, you esteem the philosophers and the Protestants."

"Certainly I do. I say so to you. But mark, I would talk differently before the people, and would deny it."

"What! You, sincerely speaking, esteem the philosophers and the Protestants? I do not understand that."

"I repeat it. I certainly esteem them. If the philosophers and the Protestants were not conscientious men, philosophy and Protestantism could not exist; Romanism only would overrule the world."

"Please explain your idea."

"When I say that I esteem the philosophers and the Protestants, I do not mean that I partake of either the philosophical doctrines or the principles of Protestantism — it is without the question. I speak only of the followers of these doctrines and principles. Likewise I do not intend to say that all philosophers and all Protestants have my esteem, and are conscientious, but I speak of the generality of them."

"Why do you believe that, if the philosophers and the Protestants were not conscientious men philosophy and Protestantism could not exist; that Romanism only would overrule the world?"

"Because, if the forefathers of the actual philosophers and Protestants had not been honest, truthful, and conscientious, they would not have sacrificed their social stations, fortunes, friends, families, in short, their dearest interests, to protest against the immorality, su-

perstition, impiety, and tyranny of the Papal system. They would have given up, when the plough of the Inquisition traced its bloody furrows in the field of society; when they fell and died under the poniards, swords, wheels, scaffolds, woodpiles, and *auto da fé* of the inquisitors, as innumerable as the blades of grass which fall and die under the scythe of the reaper."

"I thought that the philosophers and the Protestants assail you in their books, pamphlets, and periodicals."

"Of course they do. But what are their assaults? The philosophers deny the revelation, the divinity of Jesus Christ, the redemption, the salvation of souls through Jesus Christ, etc. Then we leave the ground of battle open to them and to the Protestants, and remain concealed behind the curtain. As to the questions of dissidence between the Protestants and our church, we cannot, it is true, resist the power of their reasoning, but we care very little for it. Aiming not at the conversion of the Protestant ministers, divines, and writers, and of the talented and learned members of their churches, we are not very anxious for the soundness and solidity of our arguments; it is so easy to fascinate and blind the people! Moreover, we handle masterly the weapon of sophistry. Our dogmatical and moral theology is a tissue of sophistical reasoning. Yourself have already remarked this."

"I have."

"The Protestants can convince men of good sense, reflecting and reasoning coolly; but as masses are inflammable, and incapable of serious and profound reflec-

tions and reasoning, we can easily blind and deceive them with our sophistical arguments—which is our aim.”

“Then sophistry is one of your most powerful levers to make proselytes?”

“Yes. And add to the natural power of sophistry that of our principles of morals, which are so boundlessly elastic that our moral theology is, properly speaking, a code of immorality. You understand now how easily the people admit doctrines which flatter their passions, and withal rest on an apparent logical reasoning. For instance, to win the confidence and devotedness of a drunkard, I justify his vice by the following syllogism:—

“‘Whoever drinks too much sleeps well; but whoever sleeps well does not sin. Then whoever drinks too much does not sin.’

“I ask you, Brother Paul, if this drunkard will not be convinced with my reasoning?

“Besides, as you said to me often when I played my hypocritical part with you, all vices and passions are justified, and have their apotheosis in our moral theology. As to the dogmas of our church, the people believe them without difficulty, because they do not pay attention to their absurdity, and admit without a great reluctance dogmas which are, in their minds, pure abstractions, and do not require costly practices. Through our sophisms, we could make them doubt of their own existence; doubt that perhaps it is night when it is day. For instance, what will a man of the people answer me when I say to him, at eleven o’clock in the morning, ‘It is night.’ He will evidently an-

swer me, 'It is day.' I then ask him, 'Are you infallible or fallible?' If he answers, 'I am infallible,' I draw the consequence, and say to him, 'Then you are God. I must worship you.' If he recoils before this consequence, and says to me, 'I am fallible,' I, in this case, draw this other consequence, 'Since you admit you are fallible, you are perhaps mistaken in believing that it is day, and must admit that perhaps it is night.' "

"Father Francis, now I am fully convinced that, in your opinion, the whole doctrinal system of Popery rests on sophistry. Please tell me what you think of the modern and actual publications which support the Romish church."

"Brother Paul, your question is strange, indeed. Draw the logical consequences of what I was just now saying to you, and you will know my conviction about it. Since the most celebrated Roman theologians have established and supported the Papal system by means of sophistry, evidently our books, pamphlets, and periodicals, the doctrinal part whereof is extracted from the works of these theologians, are quite sophistical."

"Have you a great number of periodicals?"

"Thousands of them."

"Why so many?"

"Because they enable us to blind and deceive, every week, more than one hundred and twenty millions of our faithful, and, through them, many millions of their children, families, friends, and acquaintances. We make those masses of people believe that the sophisms, lies, detractions, and slanders, which fill our columns, are sound and solid reasonings — are the truth; even

that we are the personified charity. In fact, we are the ablest men of the world to dress well and produce successfully to the public a sophism, a lie, a detraction, and a slander—we breathe in that atmosphere as freely as fish in water.”

“Your periodicals cannot be read, every week, by so many people?”

“Of course. But we have many millions of subscribers, whom we have bound in conscience to get proselytes. Hence they impose the reading of our periodicals upon their children, families, and those who depend on them for their social station, or their daily bread. They win with polite and delicate regards and attentions their friends and acquaintances, and determine them to read them. Thus for one million of subscribers we have, at least, fifteen millions of readers. This is not all. We priests and monks comment on our periodicals among families, in the parlors, in our homilies, and sermons; in short, privately and publicly. Thus the faithful, who have not read our periodicals, are aware of their contents.”

“You have to spend a great deal of money to support all these papers?”

“No. We bid, and, according to the circumstances of characters and localities, oblige the people, under pain of mortal sin, to bear all the expenses.”

“Are your periodicals ably conducted?”

“Many of them.”

“Are their editors monks?”

“No. We allege, in order to deceive the people, that we abhor to mingle in financial business; but the true reason is, that our stock of literary and

scientific attainments is too light for us to conduct a periodical."

"In this case, these editors are secular priests."

"Some of them; but their papers are so poorly conducted that they are rather injurious than profitable to our cause. Still, I judge differently several periodicals conducted by secular priests, who, being humbugs as we are, and having been bribed by promotion to dignities and by the money of the pope, prostitute their consciences and their pens to the defence of our cause."

"Are the most of your periodicals conducted by laymen?"

"Yes."

"Since they are not conversant with your theology, they are not able to advocate the Romish doctrines."

"Of course; but, as I have already said to you, we do not care for solid and conclusive arguments; we know that we cannot defend our doctrines with efficacy. All that these editors have to do is to handle masterly the weapon of sophistry, which does not require a great intellectual effort for a man smart, witty, and artful."

"How can you obtain the services of these editors?"

"By bestowing upon them protection, honors, and money."

"Are they true and sincere Roman Catholics?"

"Not many of them."

"You have probably initiated them into your secrets."

“Yes ; we call them our brethren of *the short gown*. This is also the name by which we christen the book-sellers, who facilitate the circulation of our periodicals, pamphlets, and books ; who receive the initiation, too, because through us they make their fortunes.”

“Then, in your opinion, the lay writers are more learned and more capable than either the monks or the secular priests ?”

“I have not the least doubt of it.”

CHAPTER XXXVII.

CONTINUATION OF DISCLOSURES. — CONCLUSION.



AFTER a moment's silence, Paul, continuing his inquiries, asked, —

"Father Francis, what do you think of the freedom of the press?"

"I think that it is our deadliest enemy. As, after a while, it will infallibly prevail all over the world, it will certainly kill us; for, being birds of darkness, we must fear light."

"If, in a Mahometan, or Greek, or Protestant country, you were not al-

lowed to write, would you petition for the freedom of the press?"

"Certainly."

"If the Mahometans, the Greeks, or the Protestants claimed the same right in a Catholic country, would you countenance their petition?"

"Not only would I not countenance it, but I would oppose it."

"And why?"

"Because it would be for our interest."

"Would their claims be right, in your opinion?"

"Yes."

"And, nevertheless, you would oppose them?"

"It is evident."

"O!"

"You do not understand me because you forget our great principle — *man is a wolf to his fellow-man.*"

"You were speaking a moment ago of the generosity, honesty, charity, truthfulness, and conscientiousness of the philosophers and of the Protestants, even of the honesty of their leading men. You added that, in opposing you, they use only lawful and honorable means; that to you, on the contrary, all means are laudable. But does it not happen that some of them, being less virtuous, and excited by the lies, detractions, and slanders, which you say fill the pages of your books and pamphlets and the columns of your periodicals, speak and write indignantly against you?"

"It happens every day. But they do not speak or write about what I said to you of the monks, nuns, etc."

"Why?"

"Because they do not know it from their own observation and experience; because they are perfectly aware that the people, and chiefly the members of the Protestant churches, would not believe it, so incredible is it and so charitable are they; because they would not be supported in their attacks by the other writers of their banners."

"Fortunately for you."

"Of course. Still, some of the boldest of their

writers risk skirmishes sometimes ; but through the countless trumpets of our press we cause the whole world to resound with these words : ‘ *Falsehood ! Slanders !* ’ We represent ourselves to the public as innocent and harmless as lambs, as the prey of voracious tigers, as the mild and true disciples of Christ, to whom he said, ‘ If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you. ’ When the people, deceived by our hypocrisy, have supported our interests, we play the part of mercifulness. We write that, imitating the Savior on the cross, we pray for our opponents ; that we address to the God of mercy the prayer of Christ, ‘ Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do ; ’ that we practise towards our enemies this maxim of Jesus Christ : ‘ Resist not evil ; but whosoever shall smite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. ’ ”

“ What is your plan of attack through the press ? ”

“ We apply the principles of Machiavel ; or, to speak more accurately, we detract, — which, thanks to our spies and penitents, is easy for us, — we lie and slander. ”

“ The public ought to rise with indignation. ”

“ We proceed with dexterity ; we hide ourselves in the grass, and with a sudden start we bite. And I assure you that the poison we drop into the wound is not a gentle one ; it kills, and never fails. ”

“ Do you always wound your enemies so fatally ? ”

“ No ; but in all cases we attack and stab them with artfulness and perfidy. We are exactly like cats ; we counterfeit inoffensiveness and simplicity, show our velvet jaws ; and, when the moment is favorable, we

plunge our sharp nails into the reputations of our opponents."

"What kind of tactics do you use to defend yourselves?"

"We disguise, deny, and noise abroad that we are, as Jesus Christ was, in the hands of our enemies."

"You cannot always disguise and deny."

"You are right. Sometimes the scandalous deeds of our popes, cardinals, patriarchs, archbishops, bishops, monks, secular priests and nuns are so visible that we must acknowledge them. Notwithstanding, it makes no great difference; for we have foreseen all cases, and have means of justification ready for all events. Suppose that one of us has poisoned the husband of a woman he loves, or killed a young lady whom he has abused, — which happens often: the galleys in almost all European countries are a living demonstration of it, — in this case our opponents hold up the fact, and cry victory. But we answer that, if among the twelve apostles, chosen by Jesus Christ himself, one of them was a traitor, it is quite natural that one among us should be a wicked man. Thus we are not thrown headlong on the pavement, but fall on our feet as dexterously as cats."

"What do you answer when they accuse you of trampling upon the gospel by being immensely wealthy?"

"We reply that we hold our riches only to relieve the poor."

"Do you give alms?"

"Certainly, no."

"They observe this — do they not?"

"We are cautious. To deceive the people, and make them believe that we are generous to prodigality, we assemble noisily at the doors of our convents, nunneries, seminaries, etc., forty, sixty, or eighty mendicants, to whom we give a part of the remnants of our dinner. But it is not a heavy sacrifice; for our dogs, hogs, etc., having plenty of food, we should not know in what other manner to dispose of the remainder of our meals."

"Do you contribute sometimes to the public buildings or establishments of charity?"

"Peruse all the lists of subscriptions, and I defy you to meet with the name of a monk."

"Do you pay taxes?"

"In many countries the governments are irreligious enough to trample upon our rights of exemption; but in many others they are as respected as they have been for centuries."

"In what manner do you justify the luxury of your lives when you are assailed through the press?"

"If we are influential with the government, the papers are suppressed or the editors fined and imprisoned. If the press is free, we deny; we demonstrate, by publishing our rules, that we live modestly and poorly."

"When, seeing how fat, commonly, are the popes, cardinals, etc., especially the monks, canons, chaplains, and priests, your opponents write and speak against your mortifications, what can you reply?"

"Of course it is generally said among the people, 'Fat as a priest,' or 'as a monk;' but nothing is easier than to defend ourselves. We say that fatness

is an exuberance of health ; that, health being a blessing of God, he grants us this gift because we are his servants."

"And the public is satisfied with this justification?"

"Yes."

"And your opponents do not reply that your belly is your god?"

"Yes; but the people do not listen to them."

"What is your answer when they charge you with idleness?"

"We say that the functions of the sacred ministry keep us incessantly busy."

"But the people know that these functions require from you only about one hour a day."

"We are not embarrassed on a road so easy. We answer that study fills all the remainder of our time."

"They know that you do not study, since, as you say to me, you are so ignorant."

"We say that we pray or meditate."

"Knowing that your cellars are full of the best wines and liquors, your opponents write against your intemperance — do they not?"

"Yes."

"What can you reply?"

"What can we reply? — that it is a prodigality of alms; that we bought these wines and liquors to distribute them among poor families when some of their members are sick."

"Do you really distribute these wines and liquors to the poor people when they are sick?"

"No; we know better than that. When the poor

are sick, all they have to do is to go to the hospital. Ptisan and sirup are their wine and their cordials."

"Of course; but I mean the sick, who, being convalescent, would be strengthened with some generous wine."

"They may drink water if they please."

"Thus you would not give a bottle of wine to a poor convalescent?"

"Sometimes we do. But only if we see that he will after a while pay for it, if not in money, at least in working gratis for us."

"Since you store so hermetically your wines and liquors in your cellars, the people know that you do not distribute them in alms — do they not?"

"They suspect it."

"Then your opponents attack you — do they not?"

"Their aggression is quite useless; for we answer that we practise this maxim of Jesus Christ: 'Therefore, when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth; that thine alms may be in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly.'"

"Seeing your red noses and faces, your opponents accuse you of being drunkards — do they not?"

"Yes, but we charge them with slander, and make the people believe that our redness arises from our modesty, from the ardor of our piety, from our love

for God, which, by his holy grace, consumes our hearts."

"Are your opponents and the people satisfied with the explanation which you give of your fatness, and of the redness of your noses and faces?"

"Not all of them; but we then throw up to their faces these words of Christ, which apparently justify ourselves, and withal accuse them: 'Moreover, when ye fast, be not as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance; for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head and wash thy face, that thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.'"

"The Roman Catholics read the Bible, the books, pamphlets, and periodicals, written by philosophers or Protestants — do they not?"

"Certainly not. They are forbidden it under pain of mortal sin and hell. Were they allowed it, all the Papal system would fall. In fifty years, perhaps, we should have to run all over the world to find one faithful."

"Would the philosophical writings be more efficacious to shake their Catholic faith than the Bible, and the books of the Protestants?"

"O, no!"

"Why?"

"Because they could not comprehend easily the philosophical doctrines; but, reading and interpreting the Bible for themselves, being aided by the Protestant

books, they could see immediately the thread of our quackery."

"Tell me why so many faithful become sceptic."

"Because, being taught by their good sense, and knowing through their observations, what is our church, besides having not read and studied the Bible, they naturally infer that all religions are a mere quackery."

"Many faithful become Protestants — is it not so?"

"Not many."

"And why?"

"For several and strong reasons."

"What are they?"

"I have just pointed out one of them."

"Which one? The prohibition of reading and interpreting the Bible for themselves; to read the Protestant books, pamphlets, and periodicals?"

"Yes. And it is the strongest; for you know the Latin adage, "*Ignoti nulla cupido*" — We do not desire what we do not know."

"What are the others?"

"One of them is the fear of our vengeance, and of our relentless and lasting persecutions. If a Catholic who becomes a Protestant is a merchant, we forbid the Catholics to purchase in his store. Is he a lawyer, we withdraw his cliency. Is he a physician, we destroy his reputation of a moral, honest, and learned man. Is he a magistrate, we kill him morally in the public opinion. Is he a public officer of the government, we are restless in our intrigues until he be deprived of his employment; and so on. You ought to understand, Brother Paul, that a man who is not endowed with an heroic energy does not sacrifice to his religious con-

victions his own interests, those of his family, of his wife, and children. Moreover, if he is an influential man, and we thereby fear to lose through him some faithful, we may be certain that, if we can, he shall be poniarded, or poisoned by our secret murderers."

"O Father Francis!"

"It is so."

"Still!"

"Without it, we could not get along."

"But to persecute, to assassinate!"

"Certainly."

"O!"

"We must have the instinct of preservation."

"What do you mean by instinct of preservation?"

"I mean that we must preserve the existence of our church."

"But not by persecuting — killing?"

"Remember that, if we do not use intolerance, persecution, and murder, the faithful will become enlightened, will shake off our yoke, and in their indignation will stone us. Keep well in your mind that intolerance, persecution, and murder are as necessary to the preservation of the Papal church as eating to the preservation of our body."

"What are the other reasons which hinder the Catholics from becoming Protestant?"

"Prejudices of every kind."

"What are those prejudices?"

"Having been baptized by us, taught our catechism, brought up in the Romish belief, and familiarized with the ceremonies of our church, these first impressions grow up in their minds with years; and, as you know

it is very difficult to break off the impressions and habits of our infancy. Besides, we have, prudently and successfully, caused to prevail in the public opinion another prejudice which is now strongly rooted."

"Which prejudice is it?"

"This it is: the faithful believe that a man cannot be honest, moral, and religious, if he leaves Catholicism. The word *apostate* sounds through their ears as synonymous with *rascal*, *scoundrel*, etc. They consider a Catholic who becomes a Protestant as a monster, as the most despicable man among them. He loses his acquaintances, friends, wife, and children, and has to live alone, avoided and hated by every body. Where are men energetic enough to confront these persecutions, and who, to obey their conscience, will accept such a bitter life? Of course there are some; but how rare they are!"

"Are many bishops Protestant by conviction?"

"A great many!"

"Are many of them philosophers?"

"The most of them are sceptics."

"Then very few among them are sincerely Roman Catholics?"

"Yes. They are the cloaked and the jackasses of the land; all the others laugh in their sleeves at them."

"Does it happen that several of those who do not believe the Romish creed leave the church?"

"No."

"And why?"

"Because they are immensely rich; have country

houses, palaces, livery, equipages; are more powerful, absolute, and honored than kings; and withal can satisfy all the brutish appetites of their senses."

"Since we speak of the secular clergy, allow me to address to you some peculiar questions."

"Well."

"What do you think of the cardinals?"

"I will speak to you my thought in one word: three quarters of them, not to say more, are not worth the rope to hang them."

"O Father Francis, I beg leave to say that you exaggerate."

"I do not."

"Still!"

"To become cardinals they must have killed father and mother."

"O!"

"Certainly."

"Explain your meaning."

"I do not mean that they really have killed their fathers and mothers; but they ought to have stifled the voice of their conscience, and the feelings of their hearts, so far as to have the courage to kill them, if it was their interest to do so. Of course you did not suspect it; yet it is the truth."

"Is it possible!"

"Perhaps you think, from the harshness of my expressions, that I judge them with too much severity; but you are quite mistaken. They are exactly what I am about to say to you. There are two classes of cardinals—those who are scattered all over the countries of the world, and are together archbishops or

bishops, and those who live in Rome. The former reach this dignity only through their slavish devotion to kings and emperors, whom they generally betray afterwards if they thwart the interests of the pope. The latter are either bishops, priests, deacons, or subdeacons, etc., and have been promoted to cardinalships through the meanest political intrigues.

“The pope, mimicking the kings and emperors, who call princes their kindred, style the cardinals *Princes of the Church*. He chooses them from among the richest and most influential families, that they serve more surely and efficaciously his own interests. Still an obscure birth is not an absolute condition of promotion ; but, in this case, the candidate ought to be one of the most hypocritically artful and wicked among the disciples of Machiavel. All the cardinals, chiefly those who live in Rome, are wonderfully rich. Almost all are anti-Christian in their behavior and belief, and initiated in the most intimate secrets of Popery. Having been nursed in the most refinedly pharisaical doctrines of Romanism, they are pharisees in their bodies and souls. Having been brought up in the bosom of wealthy and influential families, they are true worldlings. Being accustomed, from their youth, to enjoy all the pleasures of their senses ; to satisfy, without restraint, the most brutish appetites of their bodies ; and, withal, to confess, to take sacrament, to practise the easy observances of the church, — they have grown wonderfully immoral.

“Hence, whenever they go along the streets, or cross the squares, the people must kneel. They do not leave the sanctuary of their palaces without being escorted

by three ecclesiastical attendants, without reckoning the liveried escort. They require to be bowed to with the pompous title of *Eminence*. At the sight of their equipages, all carriages are bound to stop. Soldiers are compelled to honor them as if they were their generals. When they enter a city, they compel the people to illuminate their houses, and the garrisons to fire cannons. If they sail either on a river, or on a lake, or on the sea, governments are obliged to pay their travelling expenses, and the sailors to run up the national flag, and to pay to them royal and imperial honors."

"Father Francis, are the priests sincere?"

"Many are. They truly believe and practise all they preach. Of course they would resort, against an enemy of the church, to the most violent and cruel means, to poniard, poison, etc., if ordered by the bishops to do so: this, you know, is their duty; but as long as they are permitted to be kind, charitable, and devoted, they are so."

"Are they chaste?"

"Yes, and praiseworthy, so much so, that they are in the fire and yet do not burn. Under priestly garments they are men, and behave like angels. What they suffer when handsome young women confess their frailties and sins of love to them, ears to ears, lips to lips, God alone knows. Dangerous is the electric shock; dangerous is fire near powder; attractive is magnet to iron. Quick and high their hearts beat; golden and sweet are the words that drop into their ears. The butterfly that must turn round a *flambeau*, and not burn its wings, is to be pitied." And the father laughed.

"How is it that they do not suspect they are deceived by the bishops?"

"Because from infancy they have been trained by their parents to Romish belief and practices. Because afterwards the bishops have shut them up nine years in preparatory ecclesiastical schools, then four years in a theological seminary, and thus clipped the wings of their souls, fashioned them like statues, and annihilated their individuality. They have made them believe that they shall be guilty of mortal sin, and shall go to hell, if they think, feel, and act for themselves; if they read liberal papers, periodicals, or books not indorsed by episcopal approbation; if they read Protestant books and tracts; if they converse on religion with learned philosophers or Protestants, without previous permission; particularly if they read the Bible for themselves. True, doubts flock to their mind; but they do not dare entertain them, because the bishops taught them that, if they do not reject them instantly, they shall be guilty of mortal sin, and shall go to hell; that, although the doctrines of the church are in opposition to reason, they must not yield, because by the reason that the light of a taper vanishes before the light of the sun, so their individual reason ought to vanish before the collective reason of the church."

"Are the priests who are not sincere virtuous?"

"No. Many of them are degraded; they are drunkards, gamblers, and haunt low houses. The others, who know how to save appearances, are made prebendaries, chaplains, canons, arch-priests, etc. When asked why they confess young women often — 'To pardon their sins,' they answer, with a sanctimonious face. When

asked why they receive those women in their rooms or in the vestry often — ‘For the spiritual benefit of their souls committed to their guidance,’ they answer. When asked why they keep women in their houses — ‘They are near relations of ours,’ they answer; and the people believe it.” Saying so, the father smiled.

“What do you think of the societies of lay friars, who style themselves *illiterate brothers*, and wear a long black gown?”

“They do a good service; for though ignorant, they know enough of our doctrines to instruct the children of poor families and withal teach them how to read, write, and cipher. Through their influence we keep the poor classes of people under our control.”

“Are they chaste?”

“You know what I told you of the monks. They are pretty near alike.”

“What have you to say of the Sisters of Charity, who serve in hospitals?”

“They are praiseworthy, and make many proselytes among the Protestants, who admire their zeal and devotedness. As they are entirely under our command, they either poison their sufferers, or lavish upon them the tenderest cares.”

“Father Francis, is there any virtue in holy water?”

“As much as in white pills administered by smart physicians to nervous women. Although holy water is poured on hens, they do not lay more eggs after than before. Although it is poured on hogs and cattle, they are neither healthier nor more fruitful after than before. Although it is poured on houses, the walls and the timbers are not more solid and lasting; flies, mosqui-

toes, bugs, etc., are neither killed nor kept off, and the water in the wells is not made purer. Although the faithful dip their fingers into it, and make the sign of the cross with it, the devil is not kept off; they are neither healthier nor holier."

"Since the use of holy water is superstitious, why is it preserved in the church?"

"To keep the people in ignorance, and to make money by it."

"Father Francis, I wish to ask you if the leaders of the church believe in a purgatory?"

"No."

"Why do they oblige the people to believe that there is one?"

"Because it is the easiest way to extort their money. When a man dies, we tell his wife, 'It is your duty to free the soul of your husband from the flames of purgatory; therefore give us money, that we may say a mass in his behalf.' We take the money, say the mass, and go to her again. 'Dear sister,' we say, 'if you give us some more money, we will say another mass; then you will be more sure that his soul has been redeemed.' We call a third time, a fourth time, and keep on till we have wrested from her hands all the money she can dispose of, and ——"

"But her fatherless children!"

"It is her business."

"O!"

"We do even better than this. (I except many priests, who are sincere and charitable.) In Catholic countries, six out of ten faithful, who make their wills, dispose of a round sum of money to be given

to the priests, that they may say masses for the repose of their souls."

"Why are the faithful obliged, under the penalty of mortal sin and hell, to abstain from meat during Lent, on Fridays, Saturdays, and certain other days of the year?"

"To keep them down in submission."

"Why do you exempt them from this law, and other laws of the church, for money? — for instance, the law which prohibits marriage between relations?"

"Because to us, who know, money changes vice into virtue; money unlocks the doors of purgatory, and throws wide open the portals of heaven." And the father laughed.

"Is there any virtue in beads, medals, crosses, etc., to which indulgences are attached?"

"No."

"Why, then, deceive the faithful?"

"Because we make money by selling both those objects and the indulgences."

"Why do you force a Protestant who marries a Catholic to bring up his children in the Roman Catholic faith?"

"To increase the members of our church."

"Why so many tapers used in the ceremonies of the church?"

"Because the people buy them; we let them burn but a short while; then we sell them. It is a clear and considerable income."

"You ask a high price when you attend funerals. Why impose such a tax on the mourning of a bereft wife or mother?"

"We should be paid. If they are bereft, we cannot help it."

"Why a distinction between the poor and the rich at funerals? Are they not equal in the eyes of God?"

"Because we can extort more money from a rich man than from a poor man."

"Please, Father Francis, tell me in a few words what you think of Romanism as a religious system."

"We leaders of the church say that Romanism is a religion, but it is merely a pretence; in reality it is nothing but a political engine to keep the people down in ignorance, political, social, and religious slavery. The church of Rome is like a flock: the faithful are the cattle, the priests are the watch dogs, the bishops and other secondary leaders are the shepherds, and the pope is the owner of the flock."

As Father Francis pronounced these last words, his eyes fell on the clock, the hand of which was on the fourth hour.

"Brother Paul," he said, "it will soon be daylight. Our first lesson has been long and instructive; some other time I will give you another."

"Father Francis, it is the first and last one you will give me. I know enough about Romanism and its leaders. From this very moment I am no longer a Roman Catholic; I shall leave your convent as soon as the doors open this very morning."

"You are no longer a Roman Catholic in belief; this I understand. But do you mean that you will not profess publicly Romanism?"

"Yes, I do."

"Are you in earnest when you say you shall leave the convent?"

"Certainly ; I shall be true to my conscience. This I owe to my fellow-men, to my relations, to my mother, to the woman whom I love, to the gospel, and to God."

Father Francis turned pale ; there was an expression of disappointment and anger in his looks.

"Would you go to Athens ?"

"Yes, and from thence to my dear Julia."

The father opened a drawer, and took out a bundle of papers.

"Remember the letter of attorney which you signed before going to Russia. We have claimed and obtained — after a long and costly suit in law, which has reduced your brothers and sisters to extreme poverty — your share of paternal and maternal inheritance. As a proof of what I say, you may read these papers ;" and he unrolled them.

"O Heavens !" The pallor of death spread on Paul's face, and drops of cold perspiration rolled on his forehead ; he fell in a state of lethargy. The father stared at him, and smiled. Suddenly Paul rose, and glanced at the papers.

"My mother is dead ?"

"She died in Constantinople."

"Where are her remains ?"

"She was buried by Mahometans. Her grave is unknown."

"Father Francis, God orders me to forgive you ; but you should understand what are my feelings." And he rushed to the door.

Father Francis had rung the bell. Four monks seized Paul, tied his feet and his hands, and took him

to the dungeon of the convent. Several times a week Father Francis visited him, and made him the most flattering promises if he would remain in the convent. "I shall be true to my conscience," was the only answer of Paul. One evening Father Francis precipitately entered the dungeon. "Paul," he said with a threatening voice, "this very night there must be an end to your obstinacy; choose between pleasures and dignities in this convent or death. Answer."

"My body is in your power, but my soul is free."

The anger of Father Francis rose to madness. "You have lived your last day," he said, as he dashed out like an arrow to prepare and accomplish his murderous designs. Such was his fury that, when he shut the door on Paul, he forgot to turn the key. Paul hastened out, ascended a retired flight of stairs, jumped through a window into the garden, and made his escape over the walls. He made his way out of Naples along retired and circuitous streets. Oftentimes he met *gendarmes*, and great was his fear to be arrested, for he knew that Father Francis would inform the minister of police of his flight, and that orders would be given to have him taken back to the convent. As he strolled in the lanes of the city groups of *lazzaroni*, seeing his monachal gown, bowed to him, and he heard them say, "This father is going to see a sick man, or to a house of joy." Long he wandered, praying God to guide his steps. At last he saw a man dressed in a Greek costume; he went to him, addressed him in Greek, related the causes and circumstances of his escape from the convent, and requested him to lend him his assistance. "Willingly," was the answer: "I know how immoral, hyp-

ocritical, perfidious, and cruel are the monks. God has permitted our encounter. I have the command of a vessel bound to Athens; I shall set off to-morrow, and will take you on board. I am the guest of one of our countrymen; come with me, and be sure of his hearty welcome. You shall cast off your friar's gown, shall take a Greek costume, and at daylight we will embark."

Paul grasped the hand of the captain; no word dropped from his lips, but a big tear that rolled in his eyes, and the deep emotion expressed on his features, told his gratitude. They proceeded homeward. At sunrise they had embarked; *gendarmes* came on board inquiring for a friar, a native of Greece. They made a thorough search, but Paul had absconded, so that he could not be found. Soon the wind filled the sails, and two days after, Paul landed in Athens, and went, the captain with him, to the house where he was born, and had spent happy days. He knocked, and a stranger opened the door.

"Who are you, sir?"

"Paul Basilos. I wish to see my family."

"Your youngest brother has left for India, and is unheard of; your father died long ago: your mother died in Constantinople. Italian monks claimed your share of inheritance, and prosecuted your brothers and sisters, who thus were reduced to extreme poverty. Overwhelmed by their misfortunes, in less than two years they all were dead. This house I bought from the monks."

The sympathizing and charitable captain addressed

Paul words of consolation, but there is a degree of affliction which no consoling power can reach; Paul remained in the deepest dejection. Several days had passed away when he called upon the captain, to express to him his feelings of gratitude, and bid him adieu, for he had resolved to embark as a waiter on board a vessel which was to leave for Anapa. As they parted, this generous man presented him with a sum of money, saying, "Paul, accept this as a token of my friendship and sympathy for you."

Once more Paul left his native land, and returned to his endeared Julia. His recollections and feelings during the passage pen cannot describe. Arrived at Anapa, he directed his steps to the valley of the Ossetes. Several days he wandered among the circuitous paths of the forest, and at last met a party of Ossetes hunters. Pleased they were to see him again, but they did not pronounce the names either of Isram or of Julia; it seemed they feared to answer Paul's inquiries. At last they told him that soon after he left the valley Julia died of sorrow; that Isram survived her but a few days; and that both were buried in the Grotto of *Deliverance*. Paul went to the grotto, and knelt on the grave of Julia. What passed in his soul God alone knows. When the Ossetes, informed by the hunters of his return, came to the grotto, they found him a corpse lying on the grave; but no traces of violent death were seen on his body.

The Ossetes said, "Their souls are now united in the land of spirits; let their earthly remains rest in the same tomb;" and Paul was buried in Julia's grave.

Dear Paul and Julia, repose in peace ! Happier ye are than your friends and fellow-victims, who now drag out their lives in a foreign land far from those endeared to their hearts !

Ah, Church of the Pope, thy days are numbered !

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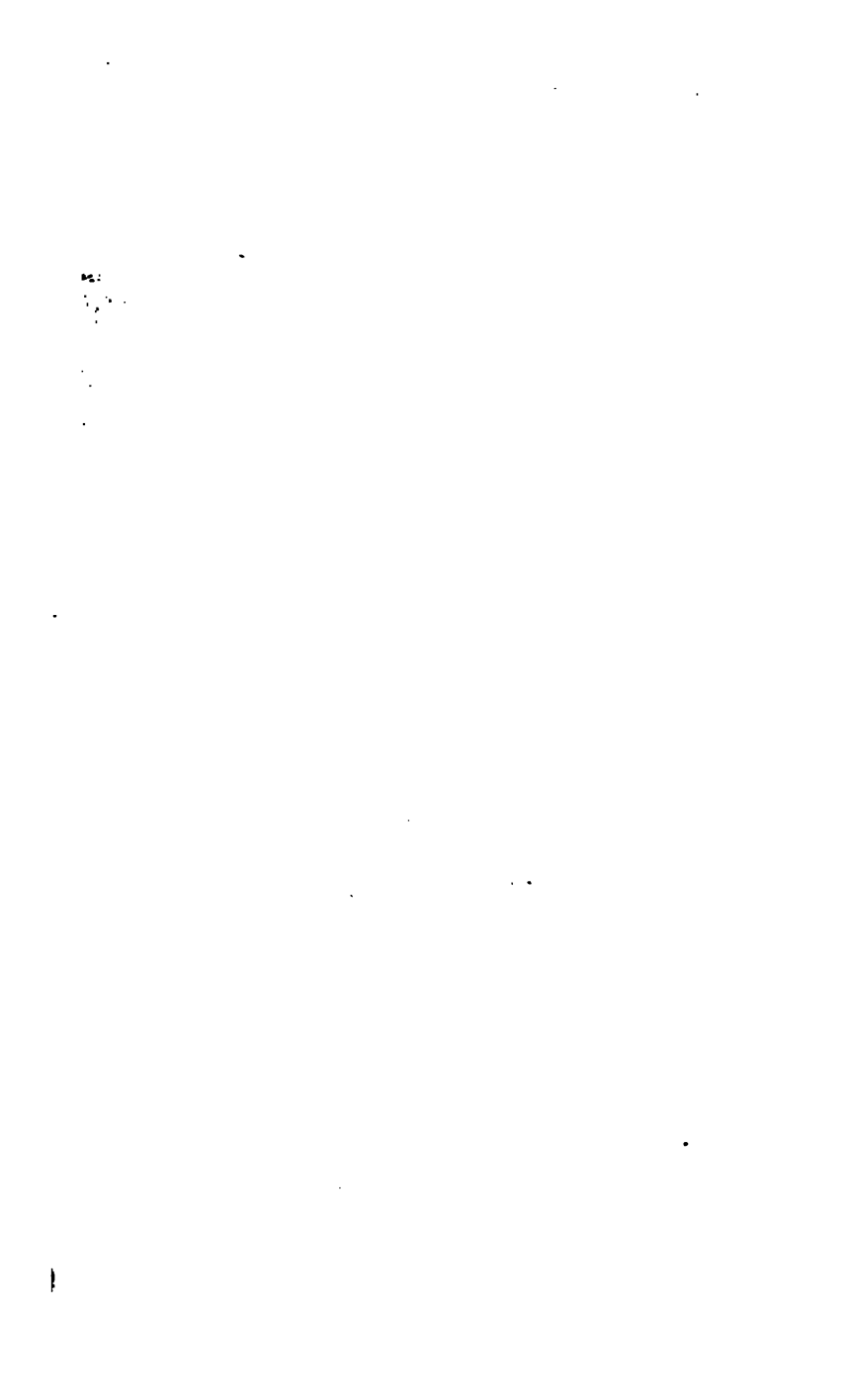


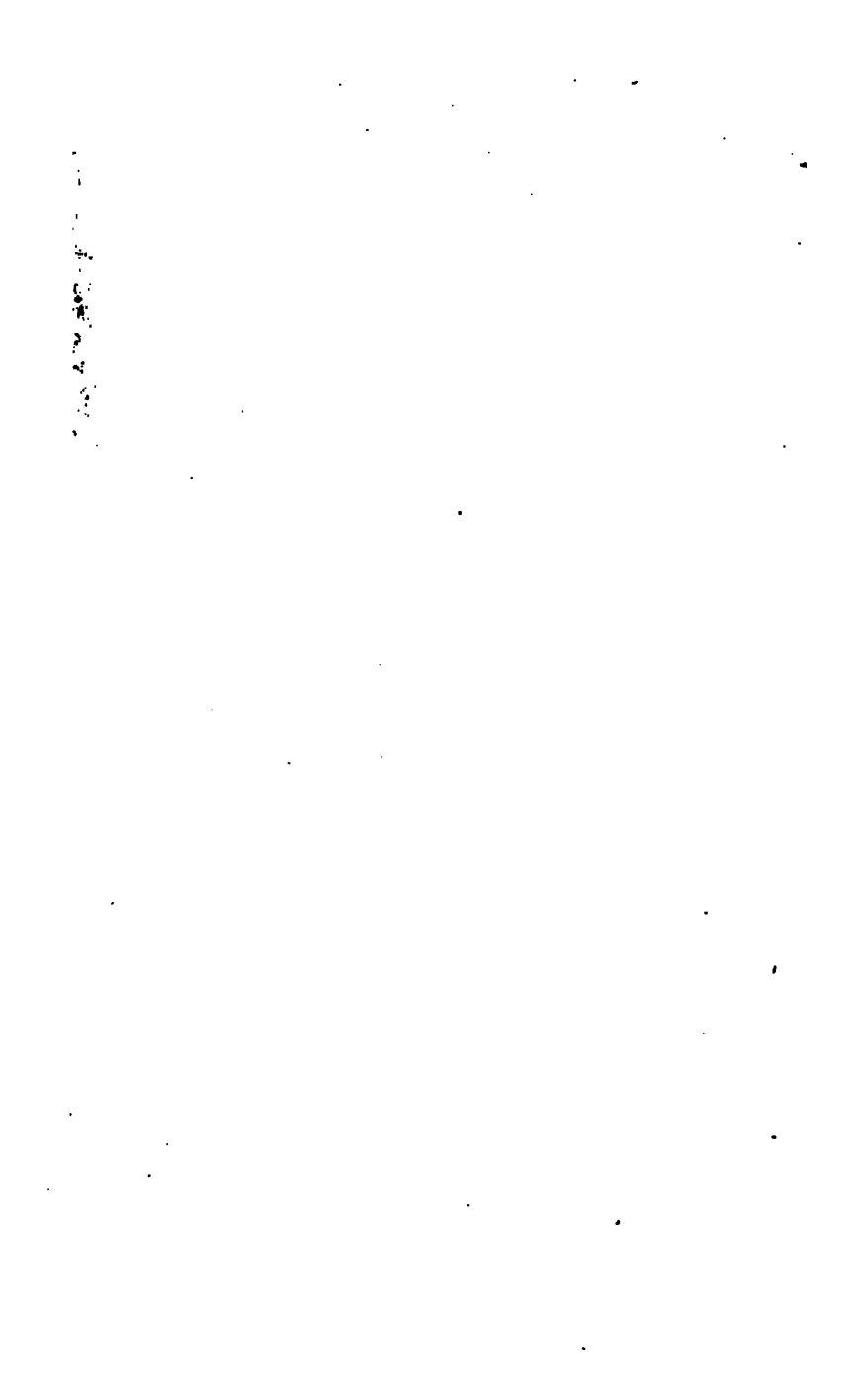
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